

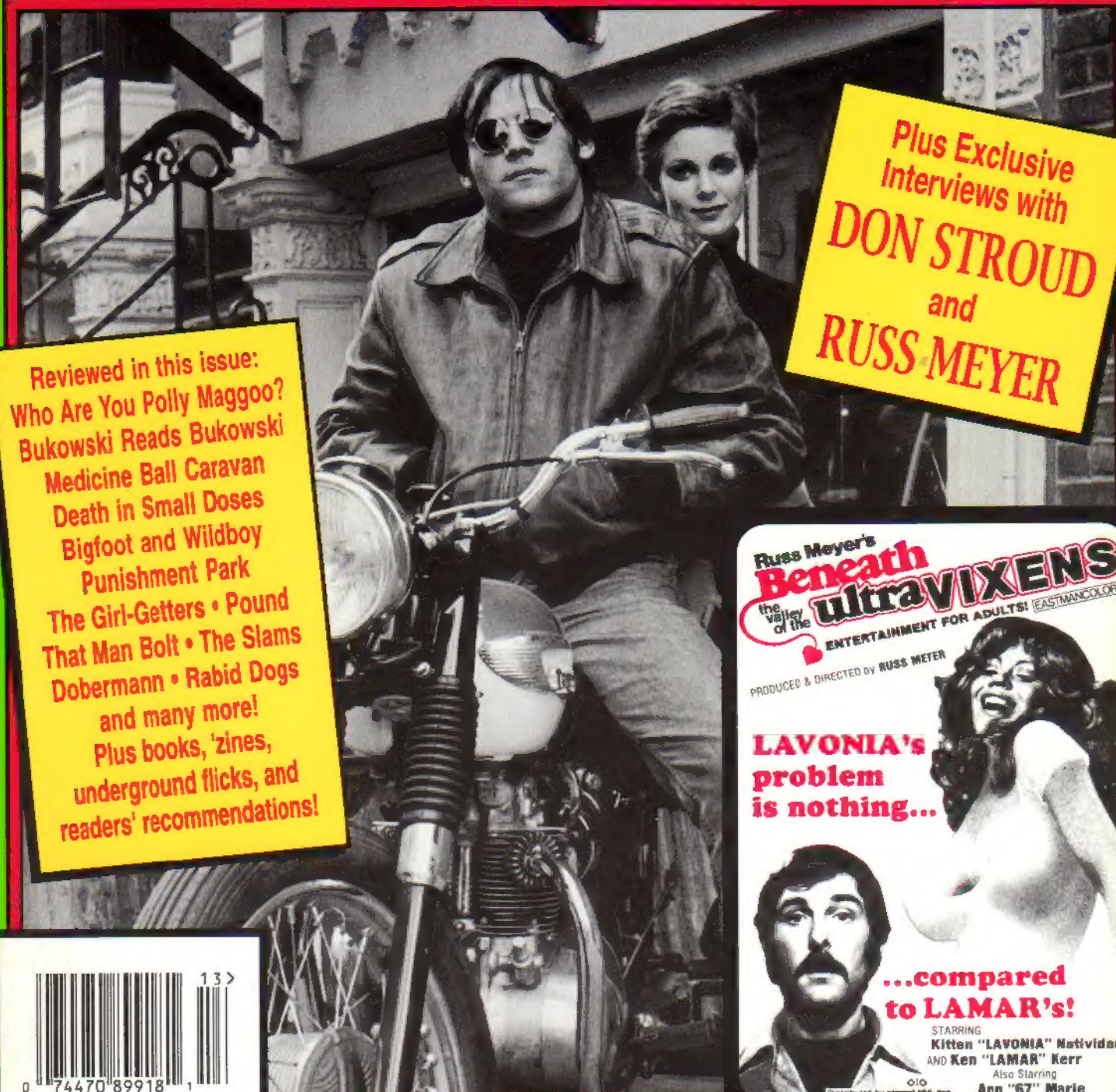
Your Guide to Cult Movies, Arthouse Oddities, Drive-In Swill, and Underground Obscurities!

SHOCK

CINEMA

NUMBER 13

\$ 5.00



Reviewed in this issue:
Who Are You Polly Maggoo?
Bukowski Reads Bukowski
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Death in Small Doses
Bigfoot and Wildboy
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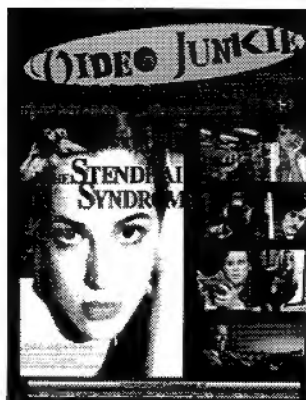
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Issue #3 of the hottest magazine since the invention of the cult movie is on the way! Features will include: Jackie Chan's Who Am I?, On the Celluloid Chopping Block: The Return of the Living Dead, The Blind Terrors of Amando De Ossorio, Dario Argento's Stendahl Syndrome, the final interview with David Warbeck, Phantasm in Retrospect, and as

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Welcome to the 13th issue of SHOCK CINEMA, and yet another dose of cult cinema at its most eclectic and obscure. Sorry, but we don't review Blockbuster's latest acquisitions (although a couple *might* slip through, when I'm not careful). Instead, we focus on drive-in dreck which most of the world would prefer to forget, overseas oddities which will never get released in the US, and every type of cinematic slop I can get my hands on. For the latest dose of SHOCK, we've also got a pair of incredible interviews, with two cinema icons. First, there's actor Don Stroud, whose outrageous on-and-off screen adventures have made him a long-time favorite. Then, we've got a visit to the home of the King of the D-Cups, Russ Meyer, and a history of his pneumatic career. So pop open that six-pack of PBR's (if you can't afford those—I know / couldn't at one time—ice cold Ballantine will do), and enjoy.

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So, what's new with myself? Not a helluva lot, since I'm been so inundated with freelance work (*Fangoria*, *The Motion Picture Guide*, *Sci-Fi Entertainment*, et cetera) that I've barely had a chance to scrape my sorry ass out of this backbone-crippling computer chair (a burnt-orange '70s-design, best suited to a John Waters film, if you must know). Why? Because now that this (once half-baked) idea of a writing career is paying off, there's no way I'm going to kick back and fuck it up. Happily, the same situation is occurring for my lovely wife, Anna, who has recently gotten her first national magazine attention for her art. Because of this workload avalanche, I haven't seen many big-screen movies recently, but have I really missed much? And since most of the American public shovels their hard-earned (or more likely, their parents' hard-earned) cash into flatulence-posing-as-films like *GODZILLA* and *ARMAGEDDON*, is there much hope for commercial cinema? Sure, a few cool flicks still turn up in theatres (most remarkably, *FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS*), but most never make it past a handful of major cities (in NYC, will Tarantino's upcoming re-release of *DETROIT 9000* play anywhere but the Ang-hell-ika?...Once you've read through some of the reviews in this issue, you might notice that I've tackled a lot of foreign-language releases, many without subtitles. That's because (1) I'm running desperately low on interesting domestic items, and (2) so many "import" distributors are making these oddities available in America. Sure, I could wait a few years, to see them dubbed and hacked for US consumption, but I'd prefer to slag my way through 'em now, and get the info to you early.

Although laserdiscs and DVD are currently offering up plenty rarities and special features, I still consider home video the bastion of bizarre, brain-fried fare, thanks to independently-owned outlets which still cater to deviant sensibilities like my own. Of course, if Blockbuster and their corporate ilk have any say about it, most smaller video venues will be

pushed out of business—particularly after their recent, ultra-lucrative deal with distributors, which gives Blockbuster the type of financial stranglehold which could eventually kill off many of the mom-'n'-pop stores. No surprise, little mention of this unholy deal was made in corporate-media, since Blockbuster is owned by Viacom, one the planet's largest, most powerful media empires (which also owns MTV, Nickelodeon, Paramount's film and TV departments, Showtime, et cetera). Faced with financial losses, Viacom's chairman (Sumner Redstone) used the clout of his 6,000 Blockbuster stores in an attempt to 'convince' the major video distributors to change their wholesale prices (but only for them, of course). After getting dissed by several studios, wouldn't you know it, Disney (the Anti-Christ of entertainment) would embrace this corporate-circle-jerk, with most of the lemming-like studios quickly following suit...You see, for most new releases, video stores have to shell out anywhere from \$60-75 for one stinking tape (whether it's *JACKIE BROWN* or *JURY ROOM*) and can barely afford more than a few copies. That situation has dramatically improved for mega-chain Blockbuster, who now initially spends about \$8 for each tape—later paying out around 40% of the their revenue (a pittance compared to what they used to) directly to the studios. That means Fuckbuster can overflow their shelves with the most in-demand titles (hence, their recent "new release guarantee"), at a fraction of what indie stores are still forced to spend. On top of all that, Blockbuster can resell these used tapes, and make back their initial costs. Meanwhile, smaller outlets simply can't compete, since they're still ponying up \$70 per video. In larger markets, like NYC, the effects of this deal won't be so noticeable, since you've got several thousand people crammed on one square block, and a corner video store has enough clientele to survive. But go outside of a major city, and you'll be on *Shit Street* if you want to rent a video and *not* drop dough into Blockbuster's deep pockets.

But enough of my ranting, because I also want to plug several upcoming local conventions, which I always have a ball attending (particularly if their bar *doesn't* charge \$7 for a beer). First off, there's Kevin Clement's bi-annual **Chiller Theatre Toy, Model and Film Expo** at the Meadowlands Hilton in Secaucus, NJ from October 30-November 1st, where you can always find tons of celebs (a *WILLY WONKA* reunion?) and dealers, plus our usual SHOCK CINEMA table...The New Year brings us another **Fangoria Weekend of Horrors** at the New Yorker Hotel in Manhattan from January 16-17, 1999. And even though I work the mag, I'm the first to admit that a few of their past cons have really tanked. I'm also glad to report that their previous one was the best in a long time, and the upcoming entry look equally enjoyable, with scheduled guests such as Dario Argento and H.G. Lewis...Finally, there's a new local convention that's close to my own heart, the **'70s Exploitation/Cult Cinema-TV & Music Con**, set for the Tarrytown Hilton in Tarrytown, NY from February 12-14, 1999. In addition to guests like David Hess and Robert Quarry, this boasts a mind-blowing blast of blaxploitation superstars, including Fred Williamson, Jim Brown, Isaac Hayes, Richard Roundtree, Ron O'Neal, and Rudy Ray Moore! Shit! If you're a grindhouse fan, it'll be like you've died and gone to 42nd Street heaven. An essential event, I hope to see you there. 10/5/98

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Unless noted, all material written by Steve Puchalski.

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Cover photo: Don Stroud and Tisha Sterling in **COOGAN'S BLUFF**.

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SHOCK CINEMA TALKS WITH THE INCOMPARABLE DON STROUD

Interview by Chris Poggiali

When you mention the name Don Stroud, the first two words which pop into my head are 'cool' and 'crazy'. And as you'll soon discover, those don't just apply to his screen career. Working with some of the biggest stars and filmmakers in Hollywood, Stroud has played whacked out villains in COOGAN'S BLUFF and HOUSE BY THE LAKE; took on the biker genre in ANGEL UNCHAINED and blaxploitation for SLAUGHTER'S BIG RIP-OFF; shared the screen with Bobby DeNiro in Roger Corman's BLOODY MAMA; and co-starred with Stacy Keach in the MIKE HAMMER TV-series. Still going strong, despite personal tragedy and long-in-the-past partying which would've burnt out a lesser man years ago, Don Stroud is definitely one of the great screen personalities. Luckily for us at SHOCK CINEMA, he was happy to delve deep into his career and treat us to his stories. —Steve Puchalski

SC: Tell me a little bit about your surfing days in Hawaii, before you became an actor.

Stroud: Well, I was born and raised in Hawaii, and I grew up on Waikiki Beach in Oahu. My dad owned a steak house right in the middle of Waikiki, back before statehood, when Hawaii was just a territory. I was one of the few *haole* boys there at the time, and all the guys on the beach taught me how to surf. Rabbit Kakai, Buckshot, Blackout, Steamboat — a lot of those guys are still on the beach. We'd surf in Ala Moana, then go to the North Shore and surf Sunset Beach, Haleiwa, and Makaha. I caught a lot of waves, and I grew up with some great surfers. George Downing, Buzzy Trent, Pat Curren — God, I even know their kids now! I was fourth in the world at the Makaha World Championship back in 1961. I was also a lifeguard for many years, and taught surfing on Waikiki Beach. That's when they were doing HAWAIIAN EYE down there, the series with Robert Conrad and Troy Donahue. I was on the beach one day and somebody said "Hey, you wanna be in the movies?" So I surfed for Troy Donahue. I was his stunt man, and I did all the surfing on that show. That's how I got into the movies. And then I came to Hollywood, parked some cars, and worked at the Whisky-A-Go-Go.

SC: You were a bouncer at the Whisky?

Stroud: I was the head bouncer, and then I became the manager after a while. This was the world-famous Whisky-A-Go-Go, on the Sunset Strip, where they used to have the girls dancing in the cages. So many great rock 'n' roll groups used to

play there — the Byrds, the Buffalo Springfield, Janis Joplin, the Jefferson Airplane, the Chambers Brothers, the Turtles. Frank Zappa was a friend of mine, and he and the Mothers of Invention used to play there. They were one of the first long-haired groups. Jim Morrison got his start at the Whisky-A-Go-Go. He was so loud — I remember one night, Johnny Rivers said "Tell that asshole to turn it down!" (Laughing) There was a little joint next door called Sneaky Pete's. I was a bouncer there one night, and the Green Bay Packers came in. They got out of line and started wrecking the fuckin' joint. "OK, take care of this." Me? Throw out the Green Bay Packers? I just split! I went next door to have a few drinks!



Don Stroud in a pensive moment from JOURNEY TO SHILOH (1968).

SC: I heard that Sidney Poitier encouraged you to become an actor.

Stroud: Absolutely! He used to come into the Whisky-A-Go-Go. It was a pretty decent joint, it wasn't just a bunch of drunks and loud music. All the big actors went there, especially Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. So I started talking with Sidney Poitier one night, talking about acting, and I said "I really want to do this." He said "Well, why don't you get yourself an agent?" So I went to Dick Clayton, who had represented James Dean, and he took me on. The first thing I tested for was MIDNIGHT COWBOY, but I didn't even know how to read a script. I wish I had started off a little differently. It all sorta nailed me in the face, y'know? But ever since I quit the Whisky-A-Go-Go, I've paid my rent making

movies. People ask me "When did you start calling yourself an actor?" I say if you're paying the rent and making the car payments, you're an actor!

SC: You were a contract player for Universal during the late '60s.

Stroud: And those days were wonderful! Universal had 30 or 40 shows going on the lot alone, like IRONSIDE, THE VIRGINIAN, and THE NAME OF THE GAME, and I was on show after show after show. I did the BOB HOPE CHRYSLER THEATER, which was a pretty classy hour-long show, like a mini-movie for television. GAMES was the first movie I did. That was with James Caan, Simone Signoret, and Katherine Ross, and I had a great part in that. I also did WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT FEELING GOOD? with Mary Tyler Moore and George Peppard, THE BALLAD OF JOSIE with Doris Day — and JOURNEY TO SHILOH was with Jimmy Caan again, but do you know who else was in that? Harrison Ford!

SC: You were in MADIGAN and COOGAN'S BLUFF for Don Siegel during that period.

Stroud: Yeah, God rest his soul. Those were for Universal. I think MADIGAN was the second thing I did. Richard Widmark came out of the dailies one day and told me what a good actor I was, and I said "Really? I know how to do this?" (Laughing) I had only been in front of the camera once or twice, and I got that great part in MADIGAN. And COOGAN'S BLUFF — Clint Eastwood wasn't really even a star then. He had just done the spaghetti Westerns. I did another one with him, JOE KIDD. Clint's great. I was up for a very small part in MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL, which he directed, but it didn't work out. I'd really like to do another film with him someday.

SC: How did you end up at American International?

Stroud: Well, I was under contract with Universal, but they would loan us out for other things, so I did five or six pictures for AIP. That was Sam Arkoff and the other guy [James H. Nicholson], and Roger Corman was a big wheel over there. I did ANGEL UNCHAINED and BLOODY MAMA there, and a few others. One was called EXPLOSION, I think, with Gordon Thomson. We shot that up in Canada, and it was about draft dodgers. I was young then — I had a lot of hair! (Laughing) ANGEL UNCHAINED played on TV not long ago.

That was with Tyne Daly! I think that fight I had with Bill McKinney was one of the better fights I've seen in a movie.

SC: Do you still ride motorcycles?

Stroud: Oh no. No no no. I had a couple of accidents, and one really bad one, and I never really rode again after that. I became pretty paranoid on a bike — and if you're paranoid on a bike, you're gonna get it.



SC: Speaking of motorcycles, you're pretty good friends with William Smith, aren't you?

Stroud: Oh yeah, me and Bill Smith go way back. Bill used to come into the Whisky-A-Go-Go on his motorcycle! I swear to God, he drove his bike right in the front door one night, a cocktail waitress jumped on the back, and he went right out the back door and up the stairs! He's an incredible bike rider. Me and Bill and Dan Haggerty used to hang around the Strip together, and we called ourselves the Gunfighters. What a group!

SC: HOUSE BY THE LAKE and THE AMITYVILLE HORROR were two others from AIP.

Stroud: I thought HOUSE BY THE LAKE was a nasty little film! Bill Fruet directed that, and I did another film for him — SEARCH AND DESTROY, with Perry King and George Kennedy. We shot those Canada. And THE AMITYVILLE HORROR was a great payday for me. I wish I had taken the part more seriously, though. That was a very strange part. I almost wish I could do it again sometime, because I couldn't find much there — and with Rod Steiger, who had that great big paintbrush going! (Laughing) He was great, though, and I got to work with my buddy James Brolin. We did HOTEL together, and we go all the way back to MARCUS WELBY, M.D.

SC: I watched BLOODY MAMA again recently. That movie just gets better and better.

Stroud: Yeah, that still holds up to this day. That's a terrific B movie. Shelley Winters, Bruce Dern, Robert De Niro — my billing is actually over De Niro's in that film! (Laughing) I'm not saying I'm a bigger actor than him, but at the time, I was certainly better known! And Diane Varsi — I loved Diane Varsi! We had such an affair! A good actress, but she believed in flying saucers and all that shit. I think she went and took a trip. She bugged, man, she went South on me!

SC: Roger Corman directed BLOODY MAMA, and you worked with him again on VON RICHTHOFEN AND BROWN.

Stroud: That was over in Ireland, in Cork and Dublin. I played Brown, the Canadian pilot who supposedly shot down the Red Baron during World War I. I was in a plane crash over there! I was in an open cockpit, double wing plane. The pilot was in the front, and I was in the back wearing full leather gear — helmet, goggles, the scarf blowing in the wind. We were about 250 feet in the air, shooting close-ups of me firing machine guns at the Red Baron. This was about a half an hour out from the airport, over the water — and a fuckin' duck came through the propeller! It hit the pilot in the head and knocked him out! He fell back, and the plane came down like a stone skipping across the water. The fuckin' wing flew over my head, the plane started to sink, and I completely experienced my death trip! It was like these big burgundy curtains closed and said The End. (Laughing) I was in my seatbelt, I had a parachute on, and we were underwater! I surfed big waves all my life, and I've wiped out in twenty-foot surf before, so I said "Fuck, this is nothing more than a terrible wipeout!" I took our seatbelts and parachutes off underwater and pulled the pilot out — and I held him up for forty-five minutes before they found us.

SC: There were other accidents on that shoot, weren't there?

Stroud: Four people died on that film! I would've been five, and the pilot six, but we both survived. I remember watching a plane go right into a helicopter — BLAM! — and then this other guy was landing in front of me, and he hit a fuckin' truck! Killed the driver of the truck and the pilot! Oh, it was unbelievable. Every week somebody got killed.

SC: When you were doing movies like VON RICHTHOFEN AND BROWN and MURPH THE SURF — where you were playing real people — what kind of preparation did you do beforehand?

Stroud: Well, I've always wondered, how do you research a guy like Brown? Everybody knows the Red Baron, but nobody ever heard about Brown.

So, I kind of...y'know, just went along with whatever it was! I don't think I've ever really played anyone I had to copy. Herman Barker [in BLOODY MAMA] was a real guy, too, and I've done a few others, but the part hasn't come yet where I have to put on make-up, like playing George Wallace.

SC: Or Gary Bussey in THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY.

Stroud: Now that's playing a part! See what I mean? I really didn't know the guy I played in THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY. He was kind of pissed off about the whole thing anyway, because he got screwed. He helped write "Peggy Sue," and he did a lot that he didn't get credit for. Then the movie came out, and it made a fuckin' fortune — like \$75 million. Y'know what kind of money that was in the late 70s? And he didn't get a dime.

SC: In MURPH THE SURF, you played Jack Murphy, and the real Allan Kuhn served as a technical advisor.

Stroud: Well, Allan Kuhn was one of our friends, but I did that movie and then I met Jack Murphy. And it's amazing how much Jack Murphy and I had in common. We both surfed, and he knew a lot of the old guys I knew. We both love the water. He's a concert violinist, and I'm a pretty decent drummer. He was a hustler in those days, and I was hanging out in the streets. We got along quite well. He was doing 200 years, but he found some kind of religion bullshit, so they let him out! (Laughing) He didn't get that major time for the robbery of the Midnight Star or the DeLong Star Ruby — no, he got arrested for murder. He ended up murdering two girls.

SC: Did you visit him in prison?

Stroud: Yeah, I went down to Raiford Prison with Bob Conrad once to visit him. That's a heavy-weight, lock-down, end-of-the-line kind of prison — y'know, the kind of prison where if you ever get away, you're just gonna have to face a bunch of dogs chasing you through the swamps! This is in Florida, near the Okefenokee Swamp. We took this really spooky ride down there in an old plane. The warden was really impressed with the movie stars from Hollywood, though. I sat in the electric chair, I went in the gas chamber, I went down death row and talked to some of the guys down there — it was quite an experience.

SC: You were also in SUDDEN DEATH with Conrad that same year.

Stroud: That's a film we did in Manila. I played a hitman from Corsica, and I made up this bullshit accent that was sort of a pidgin Hawaiian-Mexican "Hey brah, what's the deal?" Y'know what I mean? "Hey mon!" Anyway, I'm doin' the accent at a bar in Manila one night, and I got the white suit on and the Panama hat and the shades, and this American tourist asked me "Where are you from?" And I said "I'm from Corsica, mon!" He's like "Oh — where's that?" and I said "Fuck, I don't know!" (Laughing) I mean, I didn't even know where Corsica was!

SC: You posed for Playgirl around that time. How did that come about?

Stroud: I was approached to do it, so I figured why not? The only thing I don't like about it is the one big shot. I didn't take advantage of the situation, y'know what I mean? I should've been harder! (Laughing) The other pictures helped me out a bit, but that one shot — I looked at it and went "Wait a

minute, this is all wrong! I'm like a stallion!" So when you talk about angles? That was a bad angle! (Laughing) But the best part of that deal? I was one of the centerfold guys at the Coyote Convention in Chicago. It's a hooker convention! I was signing autographs at their convention! There were 500 hookers there! 500 hookers! And I swear to God, I must've fucked 200 of them! (Laughing) One time, Larry Hagman and I judged a beauty contest down in San Diego. Oh, those were some laughs! If you're any kind of celebrity, it's like — whatever you need.

SC: You mentioned JOE KIDD earlier...

Stroud: A lot of people like that film. I don't think it's a great Western, but a lot of people like it. Robert Duvall was very good in it, and my character Lamarr was a crazy son of a bitch, but the film was just OK. I know Clint and [director John Sturges] were having terrible problems on that. I think Clint should've directed it. That film had a lot there, but it came out like a television show. I think they missed by a mile. It's like THE CHOIRBOYS. That's a great book, but they took the script and turned it into a television show. They had some of the best actors in town — Jimmy Woods, Lou Gossett, Perry King, Charles Durning — but it was a terrible film.

SC: Joseph Wambaugh disowned the movie, didn't he?

Stroud: Oh yeah, he had a terrible trip on that. He wanted me to have dinner with him one night to talk about this complicated and brilliant part I was playing, Sam Niles, but [the producers] said they'd sue me if I had any kind of contact with him. Basically, I had to stick with my gang. I was so disappointed with that film. It could've been as good as THE ONION FIELD, or at least THE BLUE KNIGHT. It's a shame.

SC: Was Robert Aldrich fighting with Wambaugh also?

Stroud: Everybody was fighting. "Cut! Get the phone! Aldrich is on the phone! Wambaugh's on the phone!" Oh, it was just bullshit. And they'd be screaming and hanging up and banging into things. I'm surprised Aldrich didn't have a heart attack right then and there. It was a very heavy strain on him, with all those lawsuits. Everybody was suing everybody. I was hanging out with James Woods in those days, and our buddy Tim McIntire. He was in THE GUMBALL RALLY, remember?

SC: Sure, and he was in AMERICAN HOT WAX.

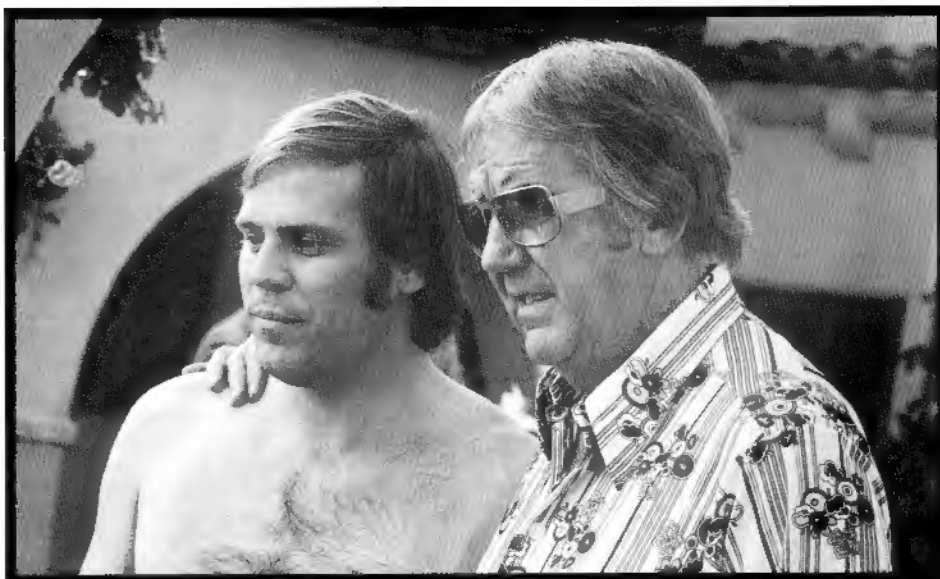
Stroud: He did a couple of really good films. He died, did you know that? Tim OD'd. He loved those drugs. I'm really glad I slowed down.

SC: You were livin' in the fast lane for a while?

Stroud: I was a wild motherfucker! I used to work drunk — and I'd get away with it, too, because the parts I always played were bad guys, drunk guys, and psychopathic bikers. So I'd just go get drunk and come in on my own bike! (Laughing) I got away with a lot of crap, but a couple of guys I know are still out there. I mean, how could you still be doing that at 55? It's like having a ponytail when you're bald. Cut your fuckin' hair already!

SC: So you cleaned up your act?

Stroud: Oh yeah. I've been straight for seven years now. No drugs, no booze. A lot of people are straight for 30 days — straight my ass! Try seven years!



Shirtless Don Stroud and a fashion-challenged Ed McMahon in SLAUGHTER'S BIG RIP-OFF (1973).

SC: KATIE: PORTRAIT OF A CENTERFOLD was Kim Basinger's first starring role.

Stroud: And I got to do a little love scene with her! That was kind of a kick. She played a girl who came from the South and wanted to become an actress, and like thousands of the girls who do come out here, she got caught into doing porno shots. I played this prick who lived out in Bel Air and did porno films, and had all these broads running all over the place.

SC: I was surprised when you turned up in ARMED AND DANGEROUS.

Stroud: That was a part any actor could've played, but I was sure glad it came my way! James Keach produced that. John Candy and I were very, very good friends. We used to sit around and smoke dope in Laurel Canyon long before he was doing SCTV. We smoked a lot of dope and drank a lot of beer. We met years ago, when he was just a kid trying to get into show business, and he used to come around the Strip a lot.

SC: You were also a bad guy in a James Bond movie [LICENCE TO KILL] around that time.

Stroud: It was a great part for me, and it was an easy part for me. We were down in Mexico, and I'll tell you — I've never had so much fun doing a film. I worked for fifteen weeks on that film. Timothy Dalton, every day — "Good morning, Don, how are you?" — and we'd have our tea in the morning. Timothy's a great guy. A real straight shooter — no drugs or anything. Oh, he'll have a cocktail with you though! I hung out mostly with Robert Davi on that. I had a penthouse down there, and a couple of maids. Oh man! But that's another story. I was drinkin' then. That was just before I quit.

SC: In SLAUGHTER'S BIG RIP-OFF, was that Adam Roarke you strangled in Ed McMahon's swimming pool?

Stroud: Oh, absolutely!

SC: I thought that was him, but he isn't listed in the credits.

Stroud: He isn't? He should've had credit on that. (Laughing) Who knows what happened? That's going way back!

SC: You've worked with Jim Brown a number of times.

Stroud: I like Jim a lot. I can say nothing but good things about my buddy Jim Brown. Every time we see each other, it's like "Hey, brother! How're things?" Gives me a good handshake and a slap on the back. We've always been that way. I remember when we were doing ...TICK...TICK...TICK.... I think it was in Bakersfield, it was like a hundred and fifty degrees, and I said to Jim "Y'know, I'm gonna run to the store and get myself a pint of vodka." He looked at me — "Yeah? Get me a little Jack Daniels." I went "Uh-oh! Here we go!" (Laughing) So we had a little belt together. And then we did a couple of bullshit B things after that...

SC: Like TWISTED JUSTICE?

Stroud: Yeah, I had a small part in that. Y'know what happened to me on that movie? I was carrying a gun then, a .44 Magnum. We were shooting near South Central L.A. one night, and we finished at two or three o'clock in the morning. I got off on the wrong street, down near Hill Street and Spring, and there were thousands of homeless people everywhere. I was a little loaded, and I had some coke on me. I figured I better be careful and throw a couple of shells in the gun, in case someone fucks with me — but I was going the wrong way down a one-way street and I hit a cop on a motorcycle! Well, five seconds later I was on the ground in downtown L.A. with 45 cops on me! They made me pull down my pants and open my shirt and pose for pictures and all that shit. I'll never forget it. I got a big break that night, though. When they were booking me, that cop found the cocaine in my wallet. I said "Could you give me a break, man?" And he blew it on the floor! I went "Thanks man." He didn't say anything. He just walked away.

SC: That's incredible.

Stroud: Isn't it? I've never had a record, and I could've had one then! But those were my drinking days. I'm not bragging and I'm not complaining — I'm just telling war stories. My career should've been 100% better than it was, but I got into drugs and booze pretty heavy, and that's really where the bottom line is. I loved the booze so much, and the coke — I did coke for years. When Stacy Keach

got busted, we were all doing cocaine on MIKE HAMMER.

SC: How did you manage that with Eddie Egan on the set?

Stroud: We played it real cool around Eddie. He was my buddy, and we used to hang around New York together, but we played it real cool around him. When Stacy got busted, everybody went "WHAAAT?!!" They couldn't believe it. And the only reason he got into it was because he got caught up in the work. We worked until four o'clock in the morning every single day, and we were back at nine o'clock the next day. It was a tough shoot, and everybody got into the speed thing to keep going. I was drinking and tooting at the same time, on a run for like three years. It's a shame that all happened, because I know it hurt Stacy. I don't think he's really recovered 100% from that whole deal. A lot of the people on that show didn't survive as well as I did. I went right to GIDGET after that, for almost two years, and then I did that little half-hour DRAGNET show — and then I got hurt. I got stabbed and lost my eye.

SC: When did that happen?

Stroud: In 1990. It was after I did LICENCE TO KILL, because I met with John Glen, the director, for a film with Lou Gossett [ACES: IRON EAGLE III], but I didn't get it because of that. I got attacked by six guys who were robbing and beating up this kid. I went to his rescue and really took the brunt of it. They stabbed me ten times. They cut me in back of my ear, where the nerves to my face are, so now there's paralysis on one side. I lost my eye. I thought it was all over. But when I was on the ground, and the guys had split, and I knew that I'd been hurt really, really bad, there was this great

silence — and I was waiting for someone to yell "Cut!" (Laughing) Because I had played the part many, many, many times! Clint Eastwood beat me up, Raymond Burr beat me up, JAKE AND THE FAT MAN beat me up — that's the part I played. I was the bad guy for the leading men. I made them look terrific, and at the end they all beat me up.

SC: It doesn't seem to have slowed down your career at all.

Stroud: Well, I didn't work for about a year after that. It was a tough year, too. I thought my career was pretty much over. It made me quit drinking and all that shit. I made it, though, and the most important thing is that I'm still working. The first thing I did after that was FATHER DOWLING MYSTERIES. I had a great part. I saw myself, and I said "Look, you're OK!" And thank God for Roger Corman. I've done about ten things for Roger Corman in the last several years. Thank God he came back into my life and helped me out like that, right after I got hurt. I did DILLINGER AND CAPONE for him and a bunch of others.

SC: What's on the horizon for you?

Stroud: Retirement! I've been very happily married for four years now, and we have a nice house in Manhattan Beach with a beautiful garden. I've mostly had condos, but for the first time I have a little yard that I can take care of, so I just recently got into that. I have a gorgeous German shepherd that I adore. So that's where I'm at. I'm in the last stretch of my career, and I won't work after 60. I'm 55 now, so I'll retire in five years. Hollywood's not like it used to be. I don't know why anybody would want to live here, to tell you the truth. We have a house up in Cambria, a great little town near the Hearst mansion, and I plan on retiring up there and

raising German shepherds. I'll get a great retirement from SAG, plus a lot of residuals — and when you're getting to be older, there's nothing more important than a couple of bucks! (Laughing) Nothing! You need your health, of course, but grow old and be broke? Ohhh noooo! Not for me! I have a wonderful trip to look forward to, as long as I stay healthy — and straight. I gotta stay straight. There's no going back to drinking or drugs for me. If I do, I'll be broke and back on my ass.


SC: So we'll still be seeing you for at least another five years.

Stroud: I'm doing a lot of work now. I just did NASH BRIDGES the other night, and something called MEN IN WHITE. I have a running part on the PENSACOLA series. I had a great little cameo in WILD AMERICA, and I made a bundle of dough on that. I was up for a couple of major parts last year, like ARMAGEDDON. I was so disappointed that I didn't get ARMAGEDDON! I was up for ZORRO, too.

SC: And you're in PERDITA DURANGO, aren't you?

Stroud: Right, with Rosie Perez. Alex de la Iglesia directed that. That was fun! I wanna do some more films with him. It's mostly a European film, so I don't know what kind of play it's going to get in America, but Rosie Perez has an audience. We shot it down in Mexico City, the same place we shot James Bond. It's another world down there, let me tell you! It's not Malibu! I'm also writing a book about the affairs I've had in Hollywood. Brenda Vaccaro, Shelley Winters — well, I'm not gonna go through them all now, but it's all gonna be in the book! There's gonna be some pretty funny stuff in there! ☺

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FILM REVIEWS

BUKOWSKI READS BUKOWSKI (1973).

Ever since my college days, when I first picked up a volume of Charles Bukowski's poetry, I was hooked by his hard drinking, cut-to-the-marrow view of life, sex and urban blight. And while Barbet Schroeder's epic-length *THE CHARLES BUKOWSKI TAPES* is the finest testament to the late, great (dirty old) man, this early, 28-minute, black-and-white profile chronicles the man, his life and his work on film.

Hard to believe, this was the brainchild of creator/producer Taylor Hackford, long before he turned studio whore with slop like *AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN*. For this project, Hackford got pissed with Hank, and even bailed him out of the drunk tank. Directed by Richard Davies, it was originally an hour-long film (aired by a Los Angeles PBS stat on October 19, 1973). But when the National Endowment for the Arts wanted to air it nationally, it was chopped to half-an-hour, jettisoning the most gratuitous (in other words, most entertaining) footage. Still, this is an amazing document which gave Bukowski his first coast-to-coast media spotlight.

Noticeably less gnarled at 46-years-old, but as bedraggled as ever, we first see Hank buying a six-pack at Ned's liquor store, with other customers amazed that a camera-crew would be following *this* guy around. Along the way, Hank recalls his days working at the post office, his daily routine ("Get up, drink, and write") drives his heap around LA, stops for drive-in food and explains his problems with women and inability to understand sober, ordinary people. On the cusp of cult celebrity, but earning enough from his writing to survive, he feels like "the Gods have been kinda good to me," for allowing him to wake up when he wants to. Sprinkled throughout is a 1972 San Francisco poetry reading to an exuberant crowd, complete with an on-stage refrigerator, so Hank can grab a cold one in between poems.

Not just for fans, this gives first-timers a chance to experience his achingly-cynical, yet passionate prose, full of unexpected humor and horror as well as fascinating insights into his everyday, low-life existence. The filmmaking might be raw, but it expertly captures Bukowski's spirit, making this a short but essential portrait.

ANGEL, ANGEL, DOWN WE GO [a.k.a. Cult of the Damned] (Creature Feature Video; 1969).

Yes, it's another nostalgic blast of AIP psychedelic psycho-drama. But this time around, in the hands of writer-director Robert Thom (who scripted *WILD IN THE STREETS* and *THE SUBTERRANEANS*), the counterculture is less laid-back and benevolent than in classics such as *PSYCH-OUT*. Dark and depressing at its core, this is more like a peyote-fueled *PEYTON PLACE*.

First, meet screwed-up teenager Tara Nicole (played by folk-singer Holly Near), an overweight, self-delusional "fairy princess." That's no surprise, since Jennifer Jones plays her mother, Astrid Steere, an aging ex-stage-film starlet, while Daddy (Charles Adman) is a barely-conscious homosexual drunk, who keeps naked hustlers around the house. Pressured with fame and fortune, Tara Nicole goes bonkers (accompanied by groovy nightmares) and during her coming-out party, spots the tight leather pants of rock'n'rol singer Bogart Peter Stuyvesant (Jordan Christopher). The pic then subtly intercuts shots of Stuyvesant's body, while Tara sublimates by stuffing eclairs into her mouth.

Picking up this lost, not-so-little rich girl, free-living Bogart pops her cherry and introduces her to his tripped-out entourage, played by Roddy McDowall and Blues-legend Lou Rawls. They're out for "kicks, baby," but are also little more than nasty, hedonistic, pushy assholes. Bogart is a 'rock star' with little discernible talent, while the height of their bored rebellion is skydiving? Meanwhile, Tara's folks are just as unlikable, and when they're introduced to these hairballs, round-heeled Mama plunges into bed with the sexual-y-indiscriminate Bogart.

Though increasingly slow and introspective, Bogart gets some far out dialogue, while their antics are ripe with laughable twists and u-turns. Of course, there's a ways time for a heady hallucination (e.g. Tara hog-tied and carried about a misty meadow—or unable to pee herself off the ceiling). There's also an odd use of trippy collage artwork to give us glimpses into Tara's psyche. Still, with the exception of a few perverse elements, this flick is a rather dull outing and only a middling entry in Hippie Cinema.

RIPA HITS THE SKIDS [Ripa Ruu Stuu] (European Trash Cinema; 1993).

Co-produced by Aki Kaurismäki, this film is stark, bleak, and even more life-oppressive than most Finnish productions. For his b&w feature debut, director/writer Christan Lindblad offers up a week-long glimpse into the wretched existence of Ripa (Sam Huber), a long-haired, hard-drinking lug whose first act of the day is to run to the toilet for a quick vomit.

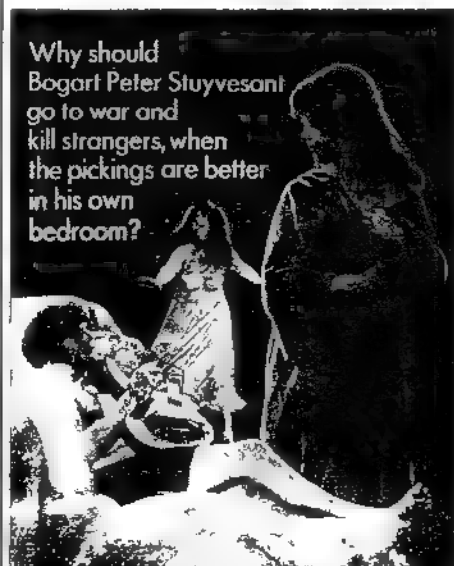
A cross between Mickey Rourke in *BARFLY* and Benicio Del Toro in *FEAR AND LOATHING*, Ripa is also a filmmaker wannabee, whose last two projects were condemned for their sex and violence. A Parasite Deluxe, who barely recalls his previous night, Ripa cruises the bars and meets bank-teller Tiina (Mari Vainio), who squirms atop him the moment he boasts of being a director. He's continually drunk, she's perpetually horny, and armed with a pocket-full of cash (thank to a hot-shit producer), these two deserve each other.

Still, all is not pleasant in Ripa-ville. The Tax Man visits and takes his '63 Mercedes, an ex-squeeze demands the money he owes her, and after trying to hit up his conservative, corporate-rooted father for cash, Ripa's only alternative is to get pissed. His old pal Antti is a pretentious (but inexplicably successful) underground filmmaker whose forte has aging punks indulging in sado-masochist acts. And by the time Ripa takes a role in Antti's butt-fuck epic, he's over the edge—going with any woman who has "lots of booze at home," killing her hunkie when he walks in on them, and becoming a wanted man. To say he's having a bad week is putting it mildly.

Admittedly, there's little to embrace in this flick, since Ripa is a broke, womanizing slob. Still, his lifestyle is so unapologetically fucked-up that you can't help laughing at his blind-drunk adventures. Imagine Fellini's *8 1/2* as conceived by a lobotomized Charles Bukowski, with a backdrop so sleazy it might as well be '70s Times Square. My only negative criticism involves the unnecessary, static-and-video segues, which might be innovative, but only detract from the mood. While *RIPA* doesn't work all of the time, when it does grab hold, this transforms into a caustic, one-of-a-kind slice of (low)life, fueled by liquor, cigarette smoke, drunken desire, and bad decisions.

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DOBERMANN (Shocking Videos; 1997).

The first feature from French director Jan Kounen (previously responsible for the cult short, *VIBROBOY*) is a hyper-stylized, ultra violent crime caper, which had EuroCritics spitting at the screen, even as audiences turned it into a hip hit. Purchased for US release by Miramax's resident slob, Harvey Weinstein, during a buyer's screening at the '97 Cannes Film Fest, it's been over 18 months and there's still no sign of the thing in the States. So, being the impatient fuck that I am, I decided to slog through an subtitled, overseas print, to see what all the buzz is about.

This blazing chunk of Cinema Extreme had me hooked after its first, cynical moments. You see, even as a baby, *Dobermann* was fated for a life of crime, when a pistol accidentally lands in his christening baby carriage. Vincent Cassel (*LA HAINE*) plays the adult result—a scruffy, hardcore thief fond of blasting the shit out of armored cars (as girlfriend Monica Bellucci stands nearby, adjusting her make-up). He then hangs out at an auto graveyard with his band of oh-so-trendy thugs (including a priest compadre). From what I could decipher, the story seems pretty routine (a speed freak version of *HEAT*), but Kounen stacks his deck with huge guns, a crazed bank robbery, a casual disdain for human life, and plenty of sadistic set pieces (such as shoving a live grenade into a motorcyclist's helmet).

Tcheky Karyo co-stars as Inspector Christini, the obsessed cop on *Dobermann's* trail, and after following the crook to a drag nightclub, it turns into a kick-ass massacre that will have NRA-members creaming their pants. In fact, Christini is as big an asshole as *Dobermann*, and isn't adverse to terrorizing a family and using an infant as bait, in order to obtain info.

Often looking like panels clipped from a comic book, this yarn is so visually overbaked that I didn't mind the lack of subtitles. Produced by TV-station France 3 (who then refused to air it), this is as outrageously violent as a Road Runner cartoon, but with real blood (and unfortunately, as much depth). Meanwhile, Michel Amathieu's camera doesn't sit still for an instant. It's obvious that Kounen is an impressive new talent, resembling Jeunet & Caro on PCP. But like this summer's *ARMAGEDDON*, Kounen's chaotic editing and lack of Master Shots begins to chafe after awhile. Still, Kounen pulled it off first, on a budget less than the cost of Bruce Willis' toupees.

THE APE WOMAN [La Donna Scimmia] (Luminous; 1963).

Long before shocking audiences with over-the-top arthouse fare such as *THE LAST WOMAN*, the late Marco Ferreri helmed this Italian romantic oddity. Despite its bizarre storyline, this is actually one of his more accessible works, and it received a decent release in the States thanks to producer Joseph E. Levine.

Unfortunately, the US print jettisoned the film's downbeat finale, in order to give it a more 'friendly' happy ending. Phooey.

Ugo Tognazzi (*LA CAGE AUX FOLLES*) stars as Antonio Setola, a sleazy showman who makes his lira by projecting 'documentary' slides of topless native dancers. During a hospital presentation, he encounters our title character, Maria (Annie Girardot), who works in the kitchen and is covered in head-to-toe hair. Immediately recognizing her money-making potential, he convinces Maria to let him turn her into a carnival attraction—an Ape Woman he captured while in Africa! Soon Maria is climbing an indoor tree, sitting in a cage, and playing Miss Monkey for the rubes. Why does she allow herself to be marketed as a freak? It's obvious that she's falling for this scumbag. Later, in order to keep his matted cashcow from running off, the money-hungry Antonio is forced to marry Maria.

But just as this war of the sexes heats up, Ferreri suddenly turns it all into a touching love story, with Antonio falling for mangy Maria and planning to market his new love as "The Hairy Angel" (complete with a risqué dance in see-thru attire). The melodrama only increases when Maria becomes pregnant and the doctor urges her to have an abortion. [Note: In the original version, Maria dies in childbirth, the baby kicks off soon after, and Antonio sells their bodies to a museum. The US cut is decidedly less nihilistic.]

At the center of it all is Tognazzi's remarkable turn as Antonio, a reprehensible asshole (but a blissfully happy one) who exploits Maria at every turn, is unwittingly cruel (with dialogue like, "Don't cry. Apes don't cry."), and even tries to rent her out for a couple days to a cynical professor. Thanks to his deft performance, the viewer actually buys into his change of heart, instead of scoffing. Meanwhile, under her make-up, Girardot holds her own, particularly once Maria develops a spine. Aided by excellent b&w photography from Aldo Tonti (*NIGHTS OF CABIRI*), this is unique twist on the usual romantic pabulum of its day, with Ferreri casually peering at the types of obsessions he would later reveal in

SZAMANKA (European Trash Cinema; 1996).

When it comes to disturbing psychological horror, it doesn't get much weirder than the uncut version of Andrzej Zulawski's *POSSESSION*, with Isabelle Adjani and Sam Neill. Unfortunately, few of Zulawski's other efforts have made it to the US. *SZAMANKA* is his most recent French-Polish project and, hard to believe, it makes *POSSESSION* look relatively sedate. Based on a popular Polish novel, this is such a hysterical goulash of sex, violence, and wild-style, that its lack of English subtitles were only a mild annoyance.

A love story taken to its beyond-extreme limits, the first few minutes are only a slight indication of what's to come, when gorgeous Italian student Wloszka (Iwona Petry) checks out a Krakow apartment and winds up raped by landlord Michael (Boguslaw Linda). At first, strangely silent, by the end of this ordeal she's enjoying it—and against any sane person's better judgment, she takes the apartment anyhow. Meanwhile, Michael is also an anthropology prof, working feverishly on his latest discovery of an amazingly-preserved, 3,000 year-old shaman.

From then on, their warped relationship primarily consists of torrid sex and unimaginable fits of hysteria. Michael initially seems like the saner half of the couple, since he's an older, more logical man of science—but even he takes on darker hues as their obsessions grow. And just wait until the outrageous finale, which begins with the shaman corpse coming to life in Michael's arms, and ends in events so brain-frying that they can only be caused by true love.

Like *POSSESSION*, this captures passion and madness at their most entwined, with Petry (who reminds me of a darker, scarier Rose McGowan) giving a tremendously erotic, unpredictable performance. Often nude, obviously unstable (this gal makes *BETTY BLUE* look as harmless as TV's Dharma), and willing to roam crowded streets with a mini-shirt rising above her ass (without panties, no less), she flies into uncontrollable tan-



trums and often seems more like a feral animal. Laced with extended softcore screwing scenes that would undoubtedly be butchered for a US release, and aided immeasurably by Andrzej Jaroszewicz's dizzying camerawork, this is a demanding exhilarating chunk of cinema at its most emotionally caustic.

THAT MAN BOLT (Creature Feature Video; 1973).

The early '70s were a great time for Fred Williamson, as he graduated from a supporting role in TV's *JULIA* and Hollywood misfires like *TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME*, *JUNIE MOON*, to become one of the hardest working stars of exploitation cinema. The '73 Christmas season proved particularly generous to fans of The Hammer, with the double-barreled release of *HELL UP IN HARLEM* and this globe-hopping actioner—Universal's attempt to turn Williamson into a cross-over star, as suave ass-kicker Jefferson Bolt. Hey, if it worked for Bond, Helm, Flint, et cetera, why not give a Brother a shot? Alas, they didn't succeed, but Fred certainly wasn't at fault, since he plays it as cool as ever.

First glimpsed in a Macao jail cell, Bolt is a wealthy international courier, and his latest gig has him handcuffed to a million bucks in US currency, which he's transporting back to America. Something fishy is going down though, and he's soon attacked in a men's room, no sweat, there's only 3-against-1, gets involved in a high-speed chase (with an underpass turning his hardtop into a makeshift convertible), and heads to Las Vegas with the cash. And never call Bolt "Black boy," because he'll whip your ass and knock you out with a flying kick. Meanwhile, every lovely lady goes into heat at the mere sight of the guy.

The plot includes setting a fireworks warehouse on fire, acupuncture torture, and that old warhorse of an evil multimillionaire villain behind it all. Following *ENTER THE DRAGON*'s lead, there's even an island monastery-turned-assassin-school! Obviously, the plot is nothing new, but Williamson gives it all a fresh, occasionally humorous spin, and for all of the ladies out there, uses any excuse to strip off his shirt (hubba hubba). In addition to Paul Mantee as a hot-headed Vegas henchman, future *GET CHRISTIE LOVE*-star Teresa Graves plays a tres-funky lounge singer named Samantha Nightingale. And while her warbling slows down the tale, her relationship with Bolt quickly heats it back up—that is, until she takes a bullet and gives Bolt a reason for revenge.

Two directors (Henry Levin and David Lowell Rich) are credited, and their other work might explain why this project turned out the way it did. Levin is best remembered for giving Dean Martin the 007 treatment in the Matt Helm pics *MURDERER'S ROW* and *THE AMBUSHERS*, while Rich's claim to fame (?) was in studio crapola like *THE CONCORDE*, *AIRPORT '79*. Occasionally silly, but in the best sense of the word, how can you not cheer a hero who gets a gun stuck in his face, and reacts by shoving his cheroot down the barrel? Ah, they don't make 'em like they use to—whether you're referring to this movie, or Williamson himself.

ON A MOONLIT NIGHT [a.k.a. Crystal or Ash, Fire or Wind, As Long As It's Love] (European Trash Cinema; 1989).

Director Lina Wertmüller has never strayed from bizarre topics, and while her career isn't as high-profile as it was during her *SEVEN BEAUTIES* days, she's still plumbing socially-incorrect areas, with the help of an all-star cast. For this French-Italian co-production, the subject is AIDS, and Lina begins on a decidedly inflammatory note, with a young married couple committing double-suicide because they think they've contracted the virus (it turns out they haven't).

Taking a breather from his usual direct-to-video sewage, Rutger Hauer stars as reporter John Knott, who decides to get the inside scoop on this worldwide panic by posing as an HIV-positive man. (Tasteless? You betcha!)

Instantly, he's treated like a pariah, and when he purposely cuts his hand in a restaurant, a physician stands up and shouts "That blood is poison!" Later, Knott runs into Luigi Montefiori (a.k.a. George Eastman) as an old pal who confides "we're in the same club." And suddenly, Knott realizes that he might actually have the virus, after all, thanks to one now-dead ex-lover.

Avoiding any self-righteous pity, Wertmüller instead gives her story a hard, deviant edge, with several weird twists once Knott ditches his life and heads to Manhattan. In a refreshing change, Hauer actually gets to act alongside plenty of recognizable co-stars. Nastassja Kinski plays a photojournalist named Joel, who's a longtime love of Knott's, Dominique Sanda turns up as a quick pick-up, Lorraine Bracco is seen briefly as an old friend, Peter On'Toole plays an AIDS-expert, while Faye Dunaway gets the oddest role, as a wealthy baby-food-manufacturer/closet-HIV-patient, who Knott blackmails into creating a condom company.

Produced by Tarak Ben Ammar (who also made the Jerry Lewis Euro-fiasco, *HOW DID YOU GET IN? WE DIDN'T SEE YOU LEAVE*), the film is graced with gorgeous locales and costumes by Versace. Yet without question, the best moment comes when infected Montefiori begins to date Joel, prompting a spectacularly vicious brawl between Knott and this reckless playboy. While never altogether successful, this is a unpredictable mix of social politics, twisted intentions and saccharine emotions.

DEATH IN SMALL DOSES (J4HI; 1957).

Only seconds into this speed-popping B-movie, you know you're in for a wild, hilariously goofy ride, as a jittery truck driver (one hand on the wheel, the other pouring pills down his throat) starts hallucinating about oncoming headlights, and finally careens off a cliff. Whoops! Based on a Saturday Evening Post article and directed by Joseph Newman (*THIS ISLAND EARTH*), this b&w expose could be retitled *THEY SPEED BY NIGHT*, and feels exactly like one of those outlandish '50s teen anti-drug pics—but without the teens.

A pre-*MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE* Peter Graves is supposed to be the hero of this yarn, but it's difficult to get worked up about a FDA investigator, trying to dam the yearly flow of "900 million happy pills." And it seems like every trucker is popping these bootleg "bennies," since you've got to have a "co-pilot." Going undercover as a student trucker on his first day, he

witnesses one old timer freaking out with a freight hook and then suddenly keeling over dead. Meanwhile, Graves' trucker-partner is a genial old gent who talks about wanting a long life—so you know he's dead meat the moment he begins investigating the source of this illegit speed supply. Boy, does that make Graves mad (notice the furrowed brow), but not mad enough to forget about hitting on a comely widow who runs a flophouse for truckers.

All of this drama is fine, but the true scene-stealer is a pre-*RIFLEMAN* Chuck Connors as Mink, an amphetamine-addicted joker who lives (and man, does he live) down the hall from Graves. A cross between Neal Cassady and Jethro Bodine, this beat bozo energizes every scene and makes this a must-see. For one run, the dude shows up in a Hawaiian shirt, with a convertible overflowing with cuties—then proceeds to run cars off the road, on his way to a Massive, 18-Wheel Freak-Out.

Demonstrating the over-the-top schlock sensibilities Connors would later bring to pics like *TOURIST TRAP*, this is the archetype of the screwed-up, over-the-top performance that would become a staple of late-'60s drug cinema. He's amazing! Do-gooder Graves, on the other hand, is *Wonder Bread* squeezed into the shape of a man. This Dixie-drama also gets points for capturing a believable blue-collar world of loading docks, gas stations and diners, but its best moments are left to the overwrought antics of Connors and his junkie Teamster pals.



THE FRIGHTENED WOMAN [Femina Ridens] (First Run; 1970).

Originally released in the US as **THE LAUGHING WOMAN**, this Italian-lensed dose of overbaked EuroSchlupp proves that 'presenter' Radley Metzger certainly knew how to pick 'em. Written and directed by Piero Schivazappa, this fetish-fest has pretensions aplenty and a fabulously stylish look (with ultra mod sets courtesy of Francesco Cuppini).

Philippe Leroy (a Terence Stamp-type) stars as Dr. Sayer, a respected philanthropist who's also a closet sadist. But when his usual whore (Mirella Pamphili) suddenly fakes a headache who's going to satiate his twisted needs? How about the prim, bespectacled Maria, who works in his office? Dagmar Lassander plays this co-worker, who winds up drugged, kidnapped and turned into Sayer's weekend slave girl. She's also caged, forced to massage his feet, given the high-pressure fire hose treatment, and generally annoyed by this bondage freak-a-holic. Meanwhile, Sayer babbles ad nauseam about how women are taking over, with the help of test tube sperm and artificial wombs.

Avoiding the usual skin-'n'-screw agenda, this chamber piece evolves into a series of manipulative sexual mindgames; and while too talky for the casual bishop-whacker, I thought it was a fascinating product of its era. Mind you, the film also offers plenty of baser treats (such as Dagmar's gauze-bandage/see-thru attire at one point), plus Maria spends so much time abused and subjugated by this misogynistic ass that I wouldn't recommend it as a First Date film.

Unlike most US sex-pics of that era, this features gorgeous production values. During a fantasy sequence, check out that set shaped like a huge, spread-legged woman, complete with a doorway-sized vagina. And how about Sayer's new-fangled boat/car! (I remember seeing those asinine things when I was a kid.) In particular, Sayer's home is a gas, complete with sliding walls, secret rooms, and mind-blowing furniture. It's Diabolik meets DeSade and the type of pad that every early-'70s swinger only wished they could afford. Groovy beyond words, and with unexpectedly-empowering twists, this is sexploitation at its most unpredictable.

"I SPENT a weekend with Sayer...

Sayer, a connoisseur of bizarre punishments and the most exquisite techniques of mental and physical torture... I am 'The Laughing Woman'... the perfect victim—ideally suited to the experience of discipline...

Find out everything I did...and everything he did...It's on film...And it's called 'The Laughing Woman'

You'll never forget it.

I never did. And I never want to..."

RADLEY METZGER PRESENTS

The Laughing Woman

starring PHILIPPE LEROY and DAGMAR LASSANDER
Directed by Piero Schivazappa. Produced by Giuseppe Zaccariello
EASTMAN COLOR WIDESCREEN • Released through AUDUBON FILMS



few remember that back in the '60s, this guy was at the top of his craft, hemming deftly cynical fare in his UK homeland, including **THE JOKERS, I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT'S 'IS NAME**, and this trendy little b&w treat.

A pre-CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF Oliver Reed stars as Tinker, a "seaside Don Juan" who with his rowdy pals, work their beach resort hometown each summer, looking for quick cash and comely "grockles" (tourists), before the off season boredom kicks in. Taking photos for a buck a pop, and snagging addresses in the process, Tinker's string of flings takes a serious turn when he falls for a rich bird named Nicola (Jane Marrow) crashes her dad's posh party, and sweeps her off her feet with his reckless charisma. She's no dummy though, and even as Tinker confronts his fears of commitment, she has her own independent agenda, which puts Tinker at the receiving end of his own "system."

On its surface, the plot's little more than an antecedent for later, US Spring Break flicks, with a pack of youthful thrill-seekers breaking rules and hearts. Instead, this is an engaging portrait of complex, yet decidedly confused characters. No surprise with up-and-coming cinematographer Nicolas Roeg

behind the lens, all of this looks amazing, with plenty of handheld camerawork and reality-bending moments. He makes the most out of funhouse mirrors, soap bubbles, and just wait until Tinker breaks loose for a tussle with a competing, out-of-town shutterbug. Ahh, Roeg is indeed a God.

Filmed on location in Roxham, this expertly executed drama of modern youth is a harsh, honest and (for its era) risqué romp. At the center of it all, Reed is a blunt force of nature and misguided masculinity—as well as a bastard you can't help but like. It also co-stars Barbara Ferris (the "Meat For Go!" girl in Boorman's **HAVING A WILD WEEKEND**) as a local lass, John Alderton (**ZARDOZ**) as one of Tinker's buds, who takes the marriage plunge, and a pre-BLOW UP David Hemmings as a square cousin. Brimming with style, yet with rarely a false moment, this character-driven drama is a welcome surprise. A great flick withousy distribution, this didn't arrive in the US until 1966, and was actually double-billed during its Los Angeles premiere with Corman's **THE WILD ANGELS**. Ouch.

DIRTY WEEKEND (Video Junkie; 1993).

Now that we've seen just how bright and innovative Michael Winner could be in an early UK effort, let's leap ahead three-decades, to discover what he's up to in the '90s, back in his home and with a similar seaside backdrop. The answer? A female **DEATH WISH** retread, that's even stranger and more abrasive than his NYC-lensed hit. Based on a controversial feminist novel by Helen Zahavi, this screen adaptation (like **DEATH WISH**'s) embraces two extremely different agendas, by mixing a feminist battle-cry with a gleefully sleazy vengeance-fest.

Lia Williams stars as Bella, a young woman who's emotionally-abused by her phony boyfriend and takes off for an impromptu seaside holiday in Brighton. Even there, she's unable to escape her problems with men, due to a voyeuristic neighbor who phones her with sick calls. Future-DARK CITY resident Rufus Sewel plays this sadistic shitwad, and does it shockingly well without one redeeming human quality.

Everything changes for Bella when an Iranian clairvoyant (played by the definitely non-Iranian Ian Richardson) convinces her to fight back. Never one to go halfway, she breaks into Sewel's home and beats his skull open with a hammer! After 45 minutes of non-stop abuse, this comes as a cathartic blast (even if Bella seems a bit too enamored with her violent new lease on life). Empowered by this long overdue act, she finds a blackmarket gun-dealer (remember, this is the UK), slips into her tightest red dress, and indulges in some highly righteous bloodshed, aimed at punks who're abusing a homeless old woman plus a local serial killer.

Straying from the standard female vigilante route, a few truly bizarre situations turn up, such as when Bella is picked-up by a repulsive, Tromasized lard-ass who strips naked (ugghh) before choking on his just desserts. Ex **MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.** David McCallum even shows up briefly as Dr. Reggie, a dentist who pays an emergency visit to Bella and quickly turns into a marvelously-psycho clean freak, sexual predator. The placid Brighton locale is a fine counterpoint to the escalating body count. Ms. Williams is

THE GIRL-GETTERS is an adult film for teenagers...and a teenage film for adults.

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12:30, 1:35, 3:05, 4:10, 6:30, 8:30, 10:10

THE GIRL-GETTERS [a.k.a. The System] (VSoM, 1964).

Nowadays, director Michael Winner is pretty-much considered a hack, despite a few cool Chuck Bronson hits in the '70s, such as **THE MECHANIC** and **DEATH WISH**. Unfortunately, the guy flushed away that goodwill with a slew of crank-'em-out crapola like **THE SENTINEL** and **FIREPOWER**. Sadly,

exceptional in this touchy role, while Winner walks a tightrope by keeping a serious veneer, even as Bella's voiceover s ripens with back-comic wit. For a final giggle, the end credits include "Bella's victims in order of disappearance," as well as "the men that got away."

THE SLAMS (Creature Feature Video; 1973).

While Jim Brown's earliest fame came as a Cleveland Browns running back, this guy was a box-office star long before '70s blaxploitation pics took over The Deuce. Later, he'd bring his cinematic strength and charisma to such grindhouse action hits as *BLACK GUNN*, *SLAUGHTER* and this prison romp. And even when there wasn't much character to work with, he didn't really need it—cause he's Jim Brown.

In addition, the tech credits are loaded with young guns who would soon carve out their own territory, starting with director Jonathan Kaplan, who would later helm *THE ACCUSED*. Cinematographer Andrew Davis would slide into the director's chair with studio-hits like *A PERFECT MURDER*, while art director Jack Fisk provided production design for arthouse hits like *BADLANDS*, as well as true classics like *PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE*.

The story begins on a solid note, with a heist, as gas-masked thieves slaughter a van load of mobsters with cyanide, then make off with briefcases full of cash and smack Brown plays their driver, Hook Curtis, who's nearly backstabbed by his honky partners—but instead, bows them away. Hiding the \$15 million and tossing the dope, he winds up in "the slams" on minor charges. So with the syndicate issuing a hit on him and government agents wanting him to play informer, Hook prefers to ride out his cellblock time and exit jail a rich man.

Of course, there's plenty of Black vs. White tension along the way, and Kaplan doesn't skimp on the violence. That's typified by ex-Lurch Ted Cassidy as the prison's resident racist sadist, who pours a ladle full of molten metal over a "nigger lover's" face in his first scene. Plus Frank DeKova plays imprisoned mob boss Capiello (and if the guy looks familiar, that's because he was *F TROOP*'s Hekawi chief, Wlad Eagle), whose open-door cell comes equipped with a television, fridge and easy chair! During respites from the prison interiors, Hook's girlfriend (Judy Pace, of *COOL BREEZE*) visits an old pimp-pal of Curtis' (warning: obligatory bare breasts) who helps with a highly improbable escape attempt involving a porta-john, switched identities, and Dick Miller as a hijacked cabbie. And just so all of the shithheads aren't white, toss in a Black guard who stalks Pace.

This starts out serious enough, but eventually loses any semblance of reality—almost as if Kaplan, halfway into production, realized how silly this was getting, and ran with it. Still, this MGM release knows what will keep act on auto awake and amused. It hits all of the necessary bases, occasionally gets truly nasty, and when Jim is attacked by several white convicts, he beats the ever-lovin' bejesus out of them all! What more could you ask for?

PUNISHMENT PARK (Shocking Videos; 1971)

Director Peter Watkins (*PRIVILEGE*) never fails to amaze, and this is one of his bleakest futuristic visions. Shot with a documentary style (similar to his Oscar-winning *THE WAR GAME*) and without a recognizable actor in sight, this film takes a chainsaw to the era's cultural upheaval. And though heavy with socially conscious rhetoric, it's all effectively integrated into a (barely) science-fiction concept.

Sometime in the not-so-distant future (which still feels remarkably like 1971), the President of the JS begins rounding up political dissidents and even casual protesters. Once they're found guilty of conspiracy to undermine the government, these agitators are sentenced to lengthy jail terms or a few days in Punishment Park—a barren section of Southern California which has been turned into a military training ground. Stripped of their most basic

Constitutional rights, pushed about by heavily-armed cops, and lectured to by a pane of conservative old farts, these prisoners have 3-days to travel 50 miles on foot across desert terrain. Given a 2-hour head start, if they can evade capture and make it to an American flag finish line, they win their freedom. If not, they die.

Observed through the cameras eyes of a foreign TV crew, the film intercuts between two packs of prisoners. On one hand, we watch a group of newbies (including Black revolutionaries, pacifists, a protest singer, and even a feminist) pleading their cases before the rabidly right-wing tribunal. At the same time, another group is being released into the 100+ degree Punishment Park, without food or water, as "the pigs" casually test out their armaments and track them down.

Although all sides of the issue get to speak their mind, the film is unequivocally left wing in its politics (and since that's also *my* side, I don't see any problem with it), with Watkins hammering home his agenda and never letting viewers off the hook. This is a torturous vision of a world gone to hell, with cops shooting women in the back and the cards always stacked in Authority's favor—even as it bluntly tackles such issues as poverty, repression, racism, and Vietnam with radio news reports describing the chaos erupting throughout the country.

A fascinating relic from an era when filmmakers were proud to wear their beliefs (no matter how corrosive) on their sleeve, a sense of hopelessness permeates every frame, until I was left both drained and extremely pissed-off. It certainly makes today's so-called causes look pretty mild mannered, and personally, made me sad to think that one of the most savagely political films about American intolerance had to come from an Englishman.

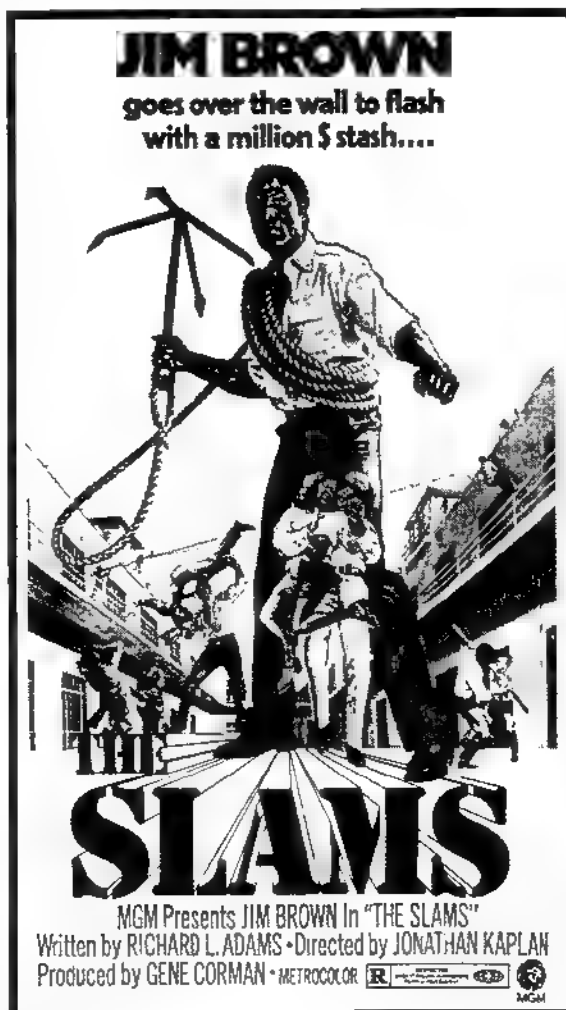
DO NOT DELIVER US FROM EVIL [Mais Ne Nous Delivrez Pas du Mal] (Video Dungeon; 1971).

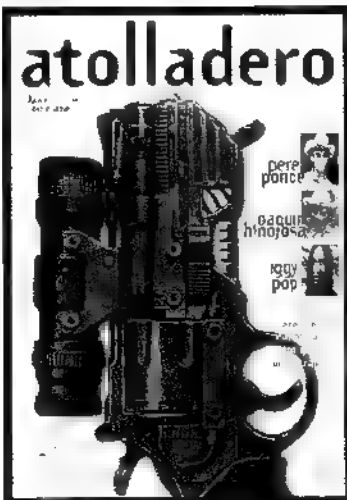
When first released, this French sex 'n' sin flick was forbidden on its home turf thanks to the country's one-time Censor Board. Of course, I had to see for myself what the big fuss was about—even though this print lacked English subtitles. It was certainly worth it. Gleefully erotic and anti-social, director-writer Joel Serrà introduces us to a pair of pretty teenage girlfriends, Anne and Lore. One's blonde, the other's brunette, each comes with fetishistic schoolgirl attire, and both of these budding bad seeds are in the mood for some cheap, destructive kicks.

The brunette, bored of her wealthy lifestyle, realizes the inherent hypocrisy of God and Goodness during a church service, and drags her less-experienced blonde gal pal along on an odyssey into Evil. They steal from their school, rat out a couple of lesbian nuns (during Confession), and bike about the area in their skimpy summer dresses—going so far as to tempt a farm hand by sprawling in the grass and exposing their white cotton panties (with one of them almost getting raped in the process).

These girls are cock-teases, all right, and they revel in the notion. A creepy handyman (Bernard Dheran), who obviously has the hots for these girls, helps them enact a strange religious mass, only to wind up with a night of denied temptation. They also kill off the guy's pet birds (and giggle as they watch him grieve). Finally, the two help out a stranger with car trouble, take him home, lounge about in only their underwear, and when he attempts to rape Lore, Anne beats him to death with a handy fireplace log.

The lead actresses (Jeanne Goupil and Catherine Wagener) are outstanding, and when the shit hits the fan, their characters have the guts to take their obsession to the ultimate level—in the middle of a school pageant, no less. I won't give away the ending, but it makes *THELMA AND LOUISE* look like Wilma & Betty. Let's not forget several sinking images, such as when the pair sets a farm on fire one night, only to bicycle around the flaming haystacks. Despite almost no nudity or on-screen violence, this is a wonderfully subversive tale of how evil can crop up in the most seemingly-innocent places.



**ATOLLADERO (Luminous, 1995)**

Take one part MAD MAX, several scoops of various spaghetti westerns, and sprinkle on the casual sadism. What do we get? A Spanish sci-fi adventure set in a grubby Texas shithole of the future. Best of all, at the center of the villainy, director Oscar Aibar hired proto-punk legend Iggy Pop (who has his dialogue dubbed into Spanish, and warbles the title credit tune).

In the year 2048, while larger centers of humanity continue to flourish, wealthy land barons rule the wilderness, with the police reduced to pawns. That's particularly true in a desert town of Atolladero, which is lorded over by a wheelchair-bound, biomechanical fossil named Judge Wedley. Better still, his top hench-

man Madden (Iggy) is a crazy fuck who's first seen abusing a kidnapped, half-dressed, six-year-old boy—with promise of an upcoming rape.

Sheriff Nick (Joaquín Hinojosa) takes all of this in stride, since he's the type of guy who matter-of-factly accepts a roadside blowjob from a passing prostitute. Deputy Lennie (Pere Ponce) is a different matter, since he wants to ditch this town and move to LA. Unfortunately, no one leaves the Judge's territory without his permission, and things get even more tense after Lennie accidentally blows up the Judge's wife (who's a victim of botched plastic surgery), leading to a cross-desert chase.

Lacking one central storyline, the first half is a grab-bag of peculiar violence and black comedy. Sprinkled with deviant moments, we have a crazy preacher who hires two whores (and the dog), a masked Santo fanatic, and a dog fight in a radioactive waste pit. A favorite moment is prompted by an Indian hallucinogen, with cave paintings coming to life and a shriveled corpse turning into a horny young woman. Plus, what's a western without a spaceship full of futuristic Texas Rangers? Excluding that, the only way to can tell this is the future is by the high-tech weaponry (such as a CGI robot bloodhound), while the remainder is straight out of BAD DAY AT BLACK ROCK.

Hinojosa pulls off his Sheriff role with an early Eastwood weaniness, while the most flamboyant moments belong to Iggy. Looking like Lance Henriksen's junkie brother, he gleefully overacts as this snarling sadist. Aibar also creates a wonderfully desolate backdrop to this madness, then fills it with big guns, short tempers and all-too-infrequent showers. An original vision of redneck, white-trash Americana—capturing it not as it is, but how it'll probably end up after another 50 years of brain-softening daytime talk shows.

WHO ARE YOU POLLY MAGGOO? [Qui Êtes-Vous Polly Maggoo?] (Shocking Videos; 1966).

Director William Klein will always be a hero of mine, after his incredible anti-US superhero satire, MR. FREEDOM. So, of course, this equally impressive, earlier effort was on my Must-Dredge-Up List. Visually brilliant and subversive as hell, this is French New Wave wackiness with a sledgehammer aftertaste. The feature debut from US expatriate Klein, it's a natural extension of his fashion photographer roots, and in today's era of supermodel madness, POLLY is a glorious fart into the face of this media diocy.

Klein deposits us into the world of French high fashion at its most absurd, beginning with a runway show inside a screwed-up, FLINTSTONES-like cave-creation. The models all wear aluminum sheets, bent and bolted to their bodies, while the snooty audience proclaims it "magnifique." Who cares if the models are actually getting sliced up by the sharp edges of their "clothes"? With reality sticking close to Klein's fiction, real-life model Dorothy McGowan stars as movie-model Polly Maggoo—a woman so alluring that strangers accost her on the street, asking her to be their fiancée, or run in front of speeding cars (thud!) in order to follow her.

It's Maggoo-mania, with Jean Rochefort playing a TV journalist covering Polly's unprecedented fame with a vapid profile (which has the same title as this movie). And in one of the strangest subplots (which is saying a lot), Sami Frey plays a Prince (Charming?) who longs for Polly's affections, amidst his world of toys and magic props and fab furnishings—and asks her to visit his chilly country. And yes, that's future-DARK SHADOWS cast member Grayson Hall as the lemming-like fashion publicist.

The satire comes hard and heavy, yet it's all so stylishly delivered that it becomes contagious. Klein has a dazzling sense of composition—rigidly combining sets, costumes and b&w camerawork into an altogether unique

look, which often feels like Kubrick on mushrooms. Sprinkled with several extremely-photogenic fashion shoots, I particularly loved his offbeat digressions, such as a fantasy episode which has Polly as a far-too-sexy Shirley Temple, singing "Anma Crackers in My Soup."

At the heart of the film, MacGowan proves herself a personable type, who isn't afraid to look ridiculous. Ultimately, she makes today's breed of Übermode look like freakish frauds, while bringing a rare breath of humanity to her role (despite her occupation). In the end, POLLY MAGGOO remains a tumultuous time capsule of an extravagant era, captured at its most deviously excessive. Outstanding!

POUND (AES-Nihil Productions; 1970).

Best known for early cult classics like CHAFED ELBOWS and PUTNEY SWOPE, director Robert Downey [a prince] was one of the few underground filmmakers of his era to break out of the DIY niche and into studio-sponsored work. Unfortunately, his later films (like Mad Magazine's JP THE ACADEMY) never captured his rebellious spirit. That said, POUND, one of his early features, offers up one of Downey's most half-baked ideas. Strange, subversive, and exploding with absurdist humor—yet never very funny—this inexplicably X-rated acting experiment is a fascinating debacle.

First, you have to buy into its the movie's premise. Set in a NYC pound with one Black female attendant and two idiot dogcatchers, all of the animals are played by actors, crammed into one big cage. Each performer is a different breed (and thus, a different aspect of human society)—from Sheepdog to Boxer, plus one "pedigreed bitch" (Carolyn Groves) which has all of the mares slobbering. There's an old woman with mange, as well as a Siamese cat and a lost penguin (played by Broadway producer Harry Rigby). They argue, paw at each other, explain how they wound up there, and admit to being "scared shitless" of being put to sleep. They also discuss escapology and take a breather to masturbate.

Amidst this pack of young actors, a few familiar faces stand out: A POLICE WOMAN Charles Dierkop is an Aredaie, Marshal Efron plays a Dachshund, future-Huggy Bear Antonio Fargas is a once-famous Greyhound, and Don Calia (RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD) portrays an Italian Terrier. Best of all, a five-year-old Robert Downey Jr. has his film debut as a puppy, and his first line of dialogue, to a Mexican Hairless, is "Have any hair on your balls?" Ah, what a heartwarming entry into the world of cinema.

While a majority of the film feels more like an off-off-Broadway stageplay, Downey opens this up for a handful of flashbacks, digressions and fantasy sequences. There's a so nonsensical subplot about a white guy dubbed The Honky Killer, who guns down innocent New Yorkers. Later, two thieves try to rob the place and adopt a dog instead, while smoking a joint leads to an impromptu doggie dance number, with ballet eotards for all. And Downey dusting off his fish-eye lens. No surprise, this was not a success, but nowadays is a prime example of just how desperate a studio could get, in search of the next hot new counterculture hit.

**"POUND"**

First "PUTNEY SWOPE." Now "POUND."
A film by ROBERT DOWNEY (a prince)

Written and Directed by Robert Downey. Produced by Floyd L. Peterson. United Artists

NO ONE UNDER 17

MEDICINE BALL CARAVAN [a.k.a. We Have Come From Your Daughters] (J4HI; 1971).

After earning a shitload of cash and critical kudos for *WOODSTOCK*, Warner Brothers leapt onto this cross-country concert wannabe. Unfortunately, the biggest musical acts this time around were B.B. King and Alice Cooper, who don't provide much of a hook. Instead, this misguided documentary focuses on psychedelic buses, scraggly hippies and die-dyed fashions, as 150 bra-n-fried freaks spend 21 days on the road, following the tour and experiencing America. While this might sound like the makings of a wild counterculture blast, these socially-crippled flower children are unrelentingly vapid. A telling moment is when one stoner mentions how they've seen *EASY RIDER*, and are trying to emulate it.

The alleged fun begins in San Francisco, with disc jockey Tom Donahue recruiting an entourage of local burn-outs to travel from coast to coast, with various musical acts meeting them along the way. As they turn on, tune in and try to finish a complete sentence, everything looks promising for this makeshift hippie community—at first. Then the buses begin breaking down, police pull over the bikers, and a trailer catches on fire and explodes.

Amongst their encounters, the most telling glimpse into the era involves the "STP Family," a Boulder, Colorado community of ex-Green Berets who were so fucked-up by Nam that they can no longer deal with rational civilization and resemble the cast of *THE HILLS HAVE EYES*. The only other highlight is toward the tour's end, at Antioch College, when the caravan collides with students who dislike the idea of this corporate-funded tour invading their area—say, it's just an excuse for a money-making movie. They're right, and that's a prime reason this film feels so manufactured.

Amidst all of these dreary deadbeats, the on-stage performances become a secondary concern. Still, there are a couple highlights, such as Alice Cooper with a killer version of "Black Juju" (complete with pillow feathers and a gun), plus B.B. King jamming under the hot sun. Other (less inspiring) acts include Sal Valentino, Stoneground, and Doug Kershaw and his electric violin (doing "The Battle of New Orleans"). Plus, keep your eyes peeled for cultural dinosaurs Wavey Gravy and David Pee.

Director Francois Reichenbach operates on the idea of shooting everything in sight, and whittling it down later. That's when they called on the post-production supervision of a young editor named Martin Scorsese, who had worked on *WOODSTOCK* and clipped this romp to a lean 88 minutes. They also incorporate every hallucinogenic camera trick of the day from split-screen to trippy visuals, and let's not forget some gratuitous female nudity, inside their shower teepee. While *WOODSTOCK* felt like the beginning of a new era, this *CARAVAN* feels more like a death knell. In case you're curious, the alternate title comes from an actual sign on the lead bus.

P.O. BOX TINTO BRASS [Fermo Posta Tinto Brass] (Luminous; 1995).

Director Tinto Brass is probably best known for one of his worst films, the Penthouse-produced *CALIGULA*, which provided career low-points for everyone involved. Meanwhile, the guy has been churning out sex-pics for 30-plus years, beginning with early psychedelic efforts such as *BLACK ON WHITE* and *L'URLO*. This recent outing could be seen as a sexploitation take on *Fu c's CAT IN THE BRAIN*, since Tinto stars as himself—dealing with the inherent problems of being Italy's premiere expert in erotica.

Inundated with letters (and more) from his horny fans, the lucky viewer sees each situation come to life, with oads of overly women in various stages of undress. Best of all, these actresses don't look like the usual plasticized US sex stars. The most erotic example of that is Brass' bespectacled secretary (Cinzia Roccaforte), who tempts poor Tinto with her heaving breasts—not to mention, her tendency to not wear panties and sit with her legs spread.

During the vignettes, two couples screw on the same portion of a secluded beach and get off on the exhibitionism. A neglected (BELLE DE

154 children drop in on the folks.



JOUR-styled) housewife joins a brothel, on y to have hubbie show up as a customer. A woman exposes herself to an As an tour st, another gets her first taste of phone sex there's a smidgen of wife sharing at a decadent party, plus an idiot husband who bets his sexy wife in a poker game and loses—only to have her enoy this change in lifestyle.

Not surprising, the ga who exposes the east heats up the screen the most, courtesy of the gorgeous Ms. Roccaforte and her increasing y-combustible wardrobe. And just wait until she addresses her fantasy, with a mustached Tinto clerking at a shoe store, turned on by her lack of undies, and erupting with a giant penis shaped like an elephant's trunk. Often, this is so blatantly extreme that it borders on satire.

Most of the vignettes are nothing too startling, but unlike most of today's directors, Brass has learned how to mix finesse with his unapologetically sexist film. Is it art? That's debatable. Is it a candidate for late-night Cinemax? I wouldn't be surprised. Still, you've got to hand it to Tinto, for allowing himself to come off like a sobbing old horn-dog surrounded by wall-to-wall puantang, he certainly leads a stressful life.

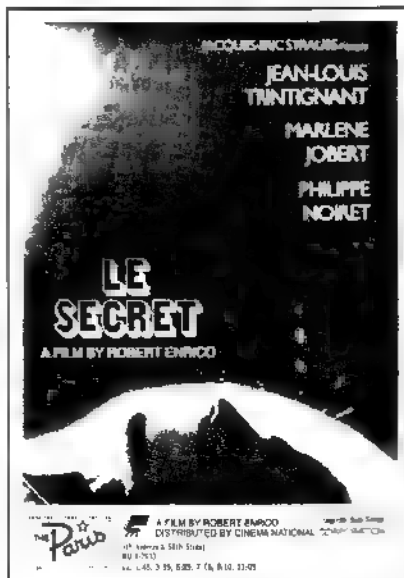
LE SECRET (Euro. Trash Cinema; 1974).

On this side of the Atlantic, Robert Enrico is best known for his 1962 short film, *AN OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE*. Since then, he's been continually directing French flicks which barely (if ever) make their way to the US, including Philippe Noiret in *THE OLD GUN* and Belmondo in

HO! This somber, psychological tale is the antithesis of today's one-dimensional thrillers, with an emphasis on mood and characters, and an entirely different pace than '90s moviegoers are used to. Still, it provides a fair share of surprises, with opening credits (played over a bound and gagged prisoner being given Chinese Water Torture) setting the proper mood.

Jean-Louis Trintignant stars as David, an inmate. An inmate of what, you ask? He doesn't seem too sure (and neither does the viewer). It could've been a prison, an asylum or (considering his red-tinted flashbacks of torture) a more sinister, political alternative. Escaping, he makes his way to the countryside and is eventually taken in by Thomas (Philippe Noiret) and his wife Julia (MASCULINE FEMININE's Marlene Jobert). With no hours, helicopters scour the area, and David is unable to trust this pair after all. Why is he being pursued? It might be due to some vague secret he has knowledge of, and if that's true, it must be a doozy, because he's got a slew of heavily-armed goons on his ass. Of course, if you ask the police, they'll tell you the roadblocks are due to an escaped convict—which could also be the truth.

Obviously, Enrico has more on his mind than a simple chase film, as David's paranoia skyrockets, even as Thomas & Julia are sucked into his delusions (?) and eventually aid in his escape. Enrico keeps the film grounded in reality, and although the middle portions are stretched a bit thin, it all comes together during a suspenseful finale and sucker punch ending. Aided by Ennio Morricone's litting score and a trio of engaging performers (though their characters are less than endearing, this is an intriguing mind-game melodrama.





1 MANIACI [a.k.a. The Maniacs] (Video Dungeon; 1964).

Why would I review some obscure b&w Italian comedy, with NO subtitles? Because it's an early, barely-remembered effort by the late Lucio Fulci—long before he became a God to hardcore gruehounds 'round the world. As an additional bonus, it co-stars the incomparable Barbara Steele. Essentially, a series of skits, this "Stupidity, Italian Style" often reminded me of Benny Hill, but without the cheap T&A or laughs. Of course, since several episodes rely solely on verbal humor, I shouldn't be too harsh.

Steele first appears as a posh wife in "L'Hobby", who secretly tails her hubby, since it looks like he's having an affair. Instead, he's just playing soccer. Is this humorous? Nope (and it continues this way for most of the movie). In another, "La Cambiale," Steele is stuck playing another wife, whose husband is more interested in

TV than her. Luckily for us, most of the skits last only a few minutes.

In addition to hitchhikers, monks, businessmen and a goateed gent visiting various strip clubs (for a welcome bit of pasties 'n' tease), one of the only mildly-clever bits is "I Consigli", in which a husband has to deal with a wife who's a backseat driver—only to get revenge when a fatal car crash allows him to direct the positioning of her coffin. For "La Comica Finale", two bumbling thieves (Franco Franchi & Ciccio Ingrassia) break into a home, steal everything (including the toilet), only to have the homeowners arrive, separately, each with a secret lover. The live rest of the bunch, Steele turns up as the husband's new conquest, and gets to strut about blindly in her undies, after losing her glasses.

Although the laughs are negligible, the film is skillfully crafted, with crisp photography by Alfio Contini. It also stars a shitload of fat male actors and overly made-up actresses. Sure, Fulci completes his might want this for their library, but even if it had subtitles, I doubt it would be considered anything more than a career footnote.

MR. INDIA (1987).

I've sat through (more often, suffered through) several Indian productions, beginning in my college days, when I'd watch them from a projection booth window, while friends were running movies for the campus' India Society. Despite some colorful moments, I was rarely impressed. That said, this bizarre slice of Bombay superhero silliness changed my mind. Directed by Shekhar Kapur (critically acclaimed for 1994's BANDIT QUEEN), the story is awash in plot twists so heartwarming that you'll want to puke, but there are also so many lovably asinine moments that it's difficult not to enjoy (particularly with the aid of a Fast Forward button).

There's a crime wave in India, headed up by a super-villain named Mugambo (Anirudh Puri), who's straight out of an old Republic serial (think Ming the Merciless on an Al Adamson budget). With his objective to "spread destruction" (now, *that's* specific), this guy has a palatial island compound, robot servants, a scientist named Dr. Fu Manchu, and an ever-present catchphrase, "Mugambo is pleased." Plus, what's a hide-out without a secret vat of bubbling acid under the floor? Or sycophantic henchmen so loyal they'll happily leap into it when Mugambo commands? A blatant symbol of British colonialism, he figures that India is already so fragmented that if he just supplies people with enough guns, they'll wipe each other out.

So far, so good. But that changes when we meet a big-hearted lug named Arun (Anil Kapoor) and his sickeningly-cute army of adopted kids. One look at these supposedly-adorable rugrats, and I realized I'd rather be trapped in a closet, on cheap heroin, with the cast of ANNIE. Then there's spunky, child-loathing female reporter Seema, who unknowingly rents out a room in Arun's makeshift orphanage. When their football smacks her in the head, she keeps it, thus prompting a song-and-dance number as these detestable children plead to get it back. Help.

No surprise, I applauded Mugambo's plan to evict these rent-owing orphans and turn their home into an arms warehouse. He even cuts off the orphans' food supply (which is pretty easy, since Arun has been mooching off the neighborhood grocers for years). But just as things look darkest, Arun discovers an irrevocably wristband, left to him by his scientist father. Enter Mr. India, "an ordinary Indian" who promises to destroy all exploiters of the Indian people, and while Seema can't stomach Arun, she's immediately smitten with our see-thru hero.

Thick with cheap melodrama (including a dead orphan), Mugambo is the most entertaining character within camera range, as he poisons children's food and (in typical Blofeld-on-a-budget tradition) plans to blow up India with his missiles. Meanwhile, the best musical number has bare midriffed Seema shimmying in a heavy rain, with fountains gushing, during a none-too-subtle love duet with Mr. India. Another jaw-dropping sequence features Indian actors in black-face! The no-tech special effects consist of Arun fading in and out, or a chair's cushion depressing on its own. Yet even with all of its over-the-top charms, at 2-1/2 hours (!), this is definitely *not* for everyone.

DEADLY ORGAN [Placer Sangriento] (Something Weird Video; 1967).

If you're in the proper frame of mind (ate at night, drunk beyond repair, you know the routine), it's hard to go wrong with a film by Argentine director Emilio Vieyra (THE CURIOUS DR. HUMPP). This item is a moody, b&w horror flick which, despite sudden lapses into silliness, strives to take itself seriously. Good luck, especially when the English language dubbing is chock full of 'groovy' dialogue like "Don't blow your cool."

The murder toll begins when a creepy guy in a cheap monster mask dumps a topless babe by the roadside, with a huge syringe jammed into her chest. This ain't your usual killer though, since he also has the good taste to drive a Porsche convertible, keeps a stoned babe back at his home base, and enjoys playing his handy organ (a good trick, since he's wearing fake monster paws). Of course, since this is the late-'60s, the teens who find the corpse report it to the cops, then blithely return to go-go dancing at a local nightclub.

The ladies certainly are attracted to this fiend, particularly since puckering up to his rubbery lips and spreading their legs earns them a hypo full of heroin. And with this bevy of junkie beauties under his spell, there's plenty of monster molestation sprinkled throughout. Meanwhile, a hunky inspector interrogates local lovelies and swarthy romances about the dead chick's past. The cops then casually dose one of the psycho's horse-addicted love-slaves with LSD, in hopes of plumbing her already-pureed psyche.

Which bland supporting sub is the masked murderer? All of the clichés are on-board, including ex fiancées, doctors, flaming queers, plus a mysterious composer whose music places women under his spell. Believe me, you won't really care. Energized by its South American locales, the best moments of this sex killer romp involve the hedonistic lifestyles of these rich 'n' horny kids—such as an impromptu tabletop striptease, accompanied by the requisite bongo riffs. In the end, this mercifully brief (70 minutes) ORGAN is more amusing for its casually deviant trappings than its creaky attempts at horror.



BIGFOOT AND WILDBOY Vol.2 (J4HI; 1977).

If you've ever had the joy of experiencing SIGMUND AND THE SEA SERPENTS, H.R. PUFNSTUFF, or any of the Saturday morning dementia provided by Sid & Marty Krofft, you're fully aware of their near-hallucinogenic charm (which made them perfect, gass-teat entertainment for twisted adolescents and stoned college kids). In 1976, these brainiacs came up with the KROFFT SUPERSHOW, a series featuring three live-action adventures: DR. SHRINKER, WONDERBUG, and the puberty-gniting ELECTRA WOMAN AND DYNA-GRL. Their second season brought the genie-comedy MAGIC MONGO, plus one show which made all of the others look relatively sane.

Yes, it's **BIGFOOT AND WILDBOY**, which detailed the crime-fighting adventures of the legendary Sasquatch (Ray Young, under so much fake hair you can only feel pity for the guy) and his feral adoptee, Wildboy (Joseph Butcher). The term 'chintzy' doesn't come close to describing their witless escapades, as they romp (in slo-mo) throughout the American Northwest. Super-strong Bigfoot looks like a mired Chewbacca, while Wildboy is a bleach blonde, jungle lad, who's too old to go back to college and get a real career. Boy, I can only imagine the coked-out, bigwig meeting for this show: "Hey, let's turn Bigfoot into a hairy superhero. Kids love Bigfoot!" Part Six Million Dollar Man, part Lassie, and part Z.Z. Top, this no-tech hokum has to be seen to be believed.

In the first episode on this tape (Volume 2!), evildoers use Bigfoot to obtain the plutonium needed for their new fangled laser weapon, by kidnapping Wildboy and using his taped voice to get the beast to rip open an armored car. In the second (directed by Leslie Martinson, who also helmed the Adam West/BATMAN movie), the duo tackle a resurrected Egyptian Mummy and the mad professor behind it all. In the final (and silliest) 'adventure', guys steal plutonium from a power station in order to build an atomic bomb, easily sneaking past the two deadbeat security guards. When one of them touches the glowing bar, he's instantly transformed into a 7-foot-tall, Hulk-like creature (except he's red) played by a young, pre-TWIN PEAKS Carel Struycken. Thankfully, Bigfoot lives next-door to this nuclear plant.

Meanwhile, the 'special' effects suck, and continually recycle the same running/leaping shots. And in this world, a laser beam doesn't blast apart boulders, but instead, makes them instantly vanish with a camera trick I was using in adolescent home movies. But wait! Even though Bigfoot speaks in a foreign tongue, he ends each episode with a Message about Nature or Goodness. He also teaches viewers that they can carry a slab of plutonium safely, as long as it's in a cigar box. Initially hilarious, and ultimately hemorrhage-inducing, this severely fucked-up kid's show is best enjoyed while in the most inebriated state possible.

SWEET JESUS, PREACHERMAN (1973).

Roger E. Mosley is best recognized for his supporting gig in **MAGNUM P.I.**, but his career has also included such diverse projects as **LEADBELLY** and **DARKTOWN STRUTTERS**. A seriously underrated actor, he shows off his charisma in this MGM release, top-billed as a cold-blooded hitman named Holmes, who neatly offs a trio of targets in the first five minutes (spraying one down with bug spray, setting him on fire, and then pushing him out of a high-rise window). Of course, we immediately like the guy.

William Smith plays mob boss Martelli, who asks Holmes to pose as a preacher in a shabby downtown church, in order to get the inside track on another creep who's trying to usurp his territory. Coincidentally, Holmes' pop was a Reverend, so he knows the "Holy Roller Game" by heart, and infiltrates this God-fearing community as the (muscular) Reverend Jason Lee. In the process, he forgets his more criminal instincts (except when he has to beat some honky asswipe senseless, of course), and soon Holmes/Lee is rallying the congregation—but still finds time to schtupp a local lovely. It all comes to a boil when a couple of innocent Black teens are gunned down by White cops, and Rev. Lee has to be the pissed-off community's spokesman.

Mosley never lets it get too sanctimonious, since he's one funky pastor, but this'll still be a letdown for anyone expecting kickass thrills—because despite a few bits of violence (e.g. a birthday party massacre), this is more of an uplifting, community-minded outing. The usually-volatile Bill Smith has little to do but sit behind a desk or in the back of a limo, talking about how upset he is (and although he's sprinkled throughout the movie, you get the feeling



all of his scenes were shot in one day). In addition, Michael Pataki (**GRAVE OF THE VAMPIRE**) shows up as a scumbag Senator, as well as a pre-JEFFERSONS Maria G-boss.

What really kills the film is its threadbare production values, leaden direction by Henning Schellerup (**THE BLACK BUNCH**), and action scenes so badly-choreographed that they border on the laughable. Despite a couple moments of indelible local scenery (e.g. an authentically-cheesy strip club, complete with a huge-afro'ed, rhythmically-challenged dancer) and personable performances, this flick gets increasingly misguided and (dare I say it?) heart-warming. Uggh.

JANIE (Alpha Blue Archives; 1970).

Hiding under her Anna Riva pseudonym, Roberta Findlay once again tackles the world of early-porno. But on this occasion, is only responsible for the cinematography. The job of directing goes to Jack Bravman, who carries on the subversive charms Findlay brought to X-efforts like **ANGEL NUMBER 9**. Although made with all of the finesse of an Army VD film, and initially looking like any other young-girl-exploring-her-clitoris tale, this softcore romp features some crue plot twists and laughs.

Most of the story is told in flashback, with Mary Jane Carpenter (who wrote the script) starring as Janie, a buxom young blonde who tells her Daddy (who she's having an incestuous relationship with, of course) all

about her exciting day. Amidst scary suburban locales, Janie and gal-pal Carol play hooky, and after prodding Carol into a woodland liaison with a stranger, Janie can only get off by running over the pair with a car! Yes, underneath that pleated-skirt and hip-boot attire, Janie is a psycho siren, who then masturbates while thinking about their corpses. Yikes!

Knowing how to "dangle a little bait," she takes a dip in a stranger's murky swimming pool, then stabs the guy (Richard Jennings aka a Michael Findlay) when he puts the moves on our topless tart. Next, an average lesbian (short hair, glasses, dresses in black) brings her home and gets more than she bargained for. Since this is a particularly good day, she even strangles her pop's bitchy mistress (Roberta Findlay).

Carpenter is certainly inviting, and her best moments involve this "teenage tramp" knocking off the cast, orgasming with sadistic delight, and searching for Daddy's affections. Meanwhile, the impromptu sex scenes look more like voyeuristic home movies. Full of hippie-era hominess, tripped-out sex 'n' violence montages, and florid narration that doesn't usually pop up in a sex flick, this is a wonderfully reprehensible endeavor, topped off with a downbeat finale which truly pegs this era of erotica.

Included on the tape is **TAKE MY HEAD** (1971), a credit-barren, 45-minute softcore effort (which Alpha Blue says was made by Michael and Roberta Findlay). Considering its unceasingly flowery narration and total lack of sync-sound, I wouldn't be surprised.

Meet David, a sex freak who sits at home, living in his own private fantasy world. Women suddenly pop up in his bathtub, masturbating to an "earth-shaking climax" (while he's in the middle of taking a dump); while a cute neighbor stops by to have him "fix her radio," get high and make out ("She likes it!" atones the narrator. "You're in!") He also plays voyeur on a lesbo couple as they caress those "creamy mounds of flesh," and fantasizes about going down on a naked gal on his kitchen table—as Mr. Narrator prods him on with "Eat breakfast, David. Eat as you have never eaten before."

Admittedly, the actual screwing scenes are so mechanical and unenergetic that they can only make you feel better about your own sex life. Along the way, I particularly loved the background details—like the dated furniture and TV—which makes this sloop seem like it was actually filmed in a real home. All in all, a blissful relic of the good ol' days of authentically horny women, and not today's Vacuumed Stepford Sluts.

THE KIDS OF WIDNEY HIGH (Blackest Heart Media; 1989).

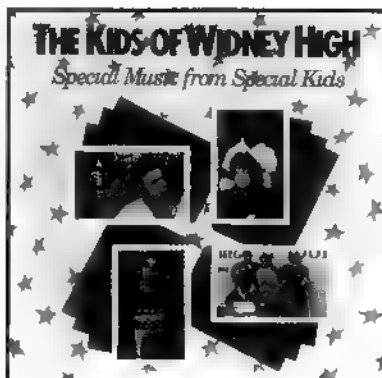
This is one truly mind-fucked video, but if you're as sick as I get after a few dozen shots of Bushmills, you're going to fall out of your chair with uncontrollable, projectile-snot laughter. The ultimate example of unintentional 'Tardsploitation, if you enjoy pointing at handicapped folks in public and laughing 'til you're asked to leave, **WIDNEY HIGH** is definitely your type of tape.

To digress, The Kids of Widney High are a pack of enthusiastic, yet untalented glue-eaters who have such developmental disabilities as epilepsy, Down's, palsy, and MD. With the help of their teacher, they put out an honest-to-goodness record, and this video is a crude compilation of the outcome—a jaw-dropping exhibition that makes you wonder who had the infinite bad taste to document it. Whoever it was, god love 'em, because this off-key artifact (a 'very special' Gong Show) will instantly empty any apartment of unwanted guests.

First, we get the Kids in a camcorder, record store concert (with almost as many in the audience as are in the band), as they writhe and barely-clap-in-tune with the music. The end result is like some Tod Browning/Werner Herzog public service nightmare. It's real. It's horrible. And it just doesn't stop! 40-minutes later, there's an inspirational, "Sunday Heroes" TV-news item, featuring failed-musician-turned-teacher Michael Monagan (who tries, against all logic, to convince others that "these songs are good songs"). There are also painful telethon appearances, their video for "New Car" (with these handicapped kids all working at a car wash), and a Charles Kuralt report, with Monagan spinning the same story.

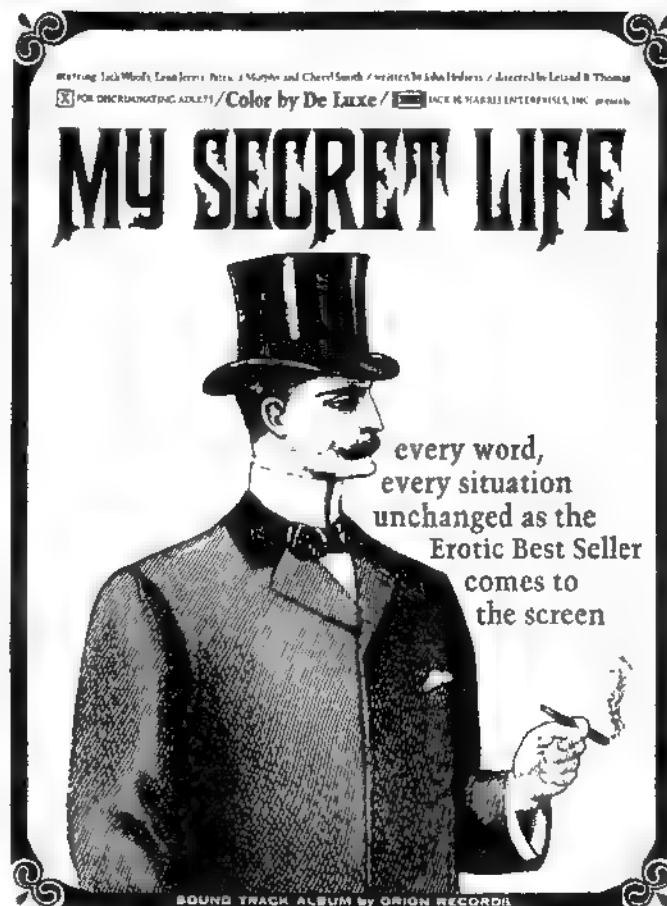
This is a mind-wrenching, 90-minute collection, and the most telling moments have teacher Monagan bragging about companies wanting to turn 'his' story into a movie (a decade later, without success). In the end, he comes off like a self-serving ass who couldn't cut it in the music scene, so he latched onto this high-concept idea. After a while, you'll want to kick the shthead in the nuts.

If these kids want to sing, I've got no problem, just so long as they don't mind me saying that they suck. Even worse, they don't realize it, since the handlers never had the good sense to set them straight. I can't carry a tune, but do I stand in the middle of a record store, proving I can't? Next time they want to perform, just give 'em a cookie, and please don't embarrass them in public this way. Heartfelt but horrible, this is a stomach-churning testament to humankind's ability to delude themselves into thinking they have a shred of talent. There's nothing wrong with building self-esteem, but this type of delusional cripple-rock is worse than a dozen, back-to-back, Jerry Lewis Labor Day telethons.

**THE KIDS OF WIDNEY HIGH: "Special Music From Special Kids" (Rounder Records).**

This 1989 CD was the music debut of these disabled musician-wannabees, who wrote and sing all 14 wretched songs. Still, many of the tunes are no less insipid than most AM hits, and at least these kids have an excuse for being a tad thick. And while I was unable to make out many of the lyrics, that's no different from any

recent Shane McGowan tune. Highlights, if I dare call them that, include "New Car" (a heartwarming song about the joy of owning a new car), "Teddy Bear" (a heartwarming tune about the joy of owning a teddy bear), "Throw Away the Trash" (a heartwarming number about...well, you get the point), "Primary Reinforcement" gives each child a chance to introduce themselves and tell what song they wrote; while far and away, my favorite tune is the wonderfully-paranoid "Insects" (with the catchy refrain "You better watch out or the insects will get you"). Admittedly, a couple of the songs are a bit catchy—in the same way you suddenly find yourself tapping your foot to elevator muzak. Music teacher Michael Monagan who produced and arranged the album, also plays most of the instruments. In fact, the funniest thing about the CD is the generic arrangement and grating drum machine, which again proves the old adage, "those who can't do, teach." [Available through Blackest Heart Media: \$20 ppd.]

**MY SECRET LIFE [a.k.a. Columbus of Sex] (VSOm; 1970).**

This pretentious flesh-fest was the first Canadian feature to get hit with obscenity charges in its homeland, since the pic deals frankly with its sexual topics amidst plenty of softcore male and female nudity. Far from the usual porn-agenda, this is based on a scandalous, 19th century, 11-volume work published by Grove Press. Meanwhile, director Leland E. Thomas strives to keep it as high-brow as possible, while rounding up several dozen college students who were willing to bare it all in the name of 'art'.

An elderly guy (Leon Jervis, a twentysomething actor, with a fake gray mustache) roams his study and recalls his long history of sexual conquests, beginning as a child when he lusted after his nursemaid and watched horses screwing. Following the motto, "All sexual acts are natural and proper to those who like them," we then get a sexual primer that includes blowjobs, voyeurism, a menage a trois, sodomy, homosexuality ("a bit of brown is every bit as nice as a bit of red"), plus seeing how many Shillings will fit inside a woman's vagina (in case you're curious, 86). Amidst its Renaissance Faire costumes and soft-focus photography, he eventually finds his true love in the equally inquisitive Sarah (Lyn Logan), his first underwater screw.

While this might sound good, little heat is actually generated, since any sexual activity is overwhelmingly stacy, with a ceaseless, droning narrator giving us every grope-by-grope detail. Sure, some of the topics are mildly provocative (considering its early-porn era) but their potential is left unfulfilled (as is the viewer). On a positive note, despite its obvious low-budget, the film is visually splendid, both in its experimental images and editing.

One odd credit stands out, for a pre-GHOSTBUSTERS Ivan Reitman, who's listed as a co-producer (alongside his future STRIPES-producer Dan Goldberg). Meanwhile, Variety listed Reitman as both editor and co-camera man (beside SCTV's Eugene Levy, who starred in Ivan's '73 pic, CANNIBAL GIRLS). No matter, because despite some remarkably receptive reviews when first released, this quaint look at early art-porn (and why this sub-genre never took off) remains more historically noteworthy than genuinely erotic.

RABID DOGS [Can! Arrablati] (1974).

Whaddaya know, it's a *new* movie from director Mario Bava! But before you wonder what I've been drinking (straight vodka, if you must know), Yes, I do realize that he died in 1980. **RABID DOGS** is actually a quarter-century old project, which was totally filmed but never finished, due to bankruptcy. The film was then saved when a current-day production company head (who co-

starred in the movie) found the footage and pieced it together using Bava's workprint and notes as a guide. The results are astounding.

Wedge in between two of Bava's most challenging offerings, *LISA AND THE DEVIL* and *SHOCK* (a.k.a. *BEYOND THE DOOR II*), this brutal gem kicks off with a carload of heavily armed thieves robbing and killing for a bagful of payroll cash. With cops on their trail and luck always against them, they kill one woman and take another hostage (Lea Lander, responsible for resurrecting the film), and finally carjack a father and his deathly ill boy—both en route to the hospital.

As the minutes tick by, the crooks—Doc, Blade and Thirty Two (Luigi Montefiori, a.k.a. George Eastman)—have a lot to worry about, including (1) their capture, (2) the kid's demise, and (3) tensions within their own group, since Blade & Thirty Two use this as an inopportune excuse to get drunk and horny. Set during a simmering, summer day, this evolves into an unwanted road trip from Hell with six seriously-sweaty characters crammed into one car and claustrophobia tightening its grip. 80% of the movie is trapped inside this auto with these scumbags, and it takes a superb director to wring so much tension out of such a simple situation.

Featuring some of the most pissed-off bastards to ever grace the screen, this makes similarly-themed US psycho-crime flicks look positively impotent—such as when these hardcore thugs glibly threaten to cut off the sick son's balls and make them into earrings. Ah, it's always refreshing to see a comatose child in mortal danger. It'd also be easy to label the film misogynistic (particularly when the crooks torture their female hostage and make her piss in the street), except that these shreds treat both sexes the same way. Capped off with a truly perfect finale, this might not be a glowing endorsement of humanity, but it is a powerful work, full of pitch black twists. Never wallowing in cheap gore or FX, this is instead a microcosm of madness—where nothing is exactly as you'd expect. Knowing that this grueling sadism-fest is nearly 25-years-old only makes it all the more startling.

THE SWINGING BARMAIDS [a.k.a. *Eager Beavers*] (Alpha Blue; 1975).

From the title(s) alone, this sounds like a goofy sex-comedy, à la *THE GAS PUMP GIRLS*. But while this flick might provide plenty of bust for your buck, it's primarily a cheap 'n' dim-witted crime romp, courtesy of scripter Charles B. Griffith (*A BUCKET OF BLOOD*) and director Gus Trikonis (*THE EVIL*). It's not a shining moment for either of them.

The story begins within the plywood confines of LA's Swing-a-Ling nightclub, which features a transvestite stage show, shitty comedians, and a staff of busty barmaids (whose efforts to keep from overflowing outta their bras are as unlikely as squeezing a Big Mac into a White Castle bun). The primary plotline involves a young psychopath who follows one waitress back to her pad, savagely slices her up and takes nude pix of the corpse. A master of disguise (he wears a wig and fake beard), the police are baffled even as this sicko goes after any barmaid who doesn't wet their pants at his lame come-on. Eventually, he takes a job as the club's dishwasher, in order to get closer to potential victims. Of course, he *really* blows a gasket when the emp oyees label this killer a "faggot," and then focuses his attention on the oh-so-pure Jenny (Laura Hippe).

The leading ladies (Katie Saylor, Renie Radich) might be lovely, but they certainly aren't accomplished actresses. The only notable figure is Dyanne Thorne's, playing a sen or waitress in between her *ILSA* gigs. In a wonderful job of atrocious overacting, Bruce Watson makes a pathetic creep of a villain. Of course, anyone with a triple-digit IQ could figure out he's the killer, which explains why the cast doesn't have a fuckin' clue. Adding a lone touch of greatness, William Smith pops up infrequently as the cop on the case. Blandly tracking down clues, Big Bill (unfortunately) doesn't get to fly into action until the very end.

By normal critical standards, this is the dregs. But as no-budget '70s exploitation goes,

this crap succeeds on every necessary level (I particularly enjoyed the crude, handheld camerawork during the murder scenes). Laced with fitfully sleazy kicks and a surprisingly energetic, corpse-aden finale, this inept flick is a wonderful example of the bad-is-good nature of drive-in cinema.



THE PRIVATE LIVES OF ADAM AND EVE (1960).

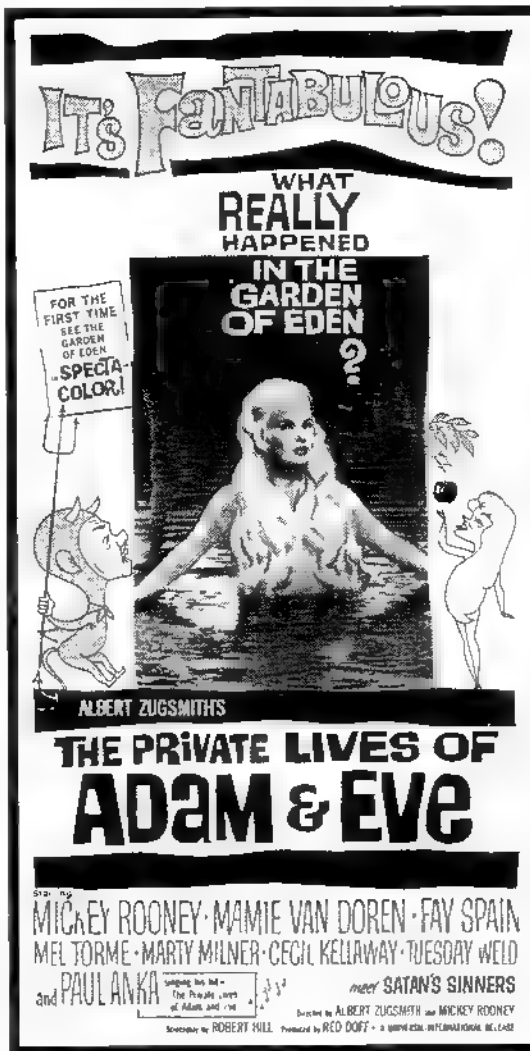
It's difficult not to dig that crazy Albert Zugsmith. Producer of such wide-ranging gems as *HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL* and Orson Welles' *TOUCH OF EVIL*, the guy also directed such masterful schlock as *CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM EATER*. In this wrongheaded endeavor, he shares the director's chair with Mickey Rooney, thus proving that two half-wits do not make a whole-wit. Still, the finished flick was condemned by the Catholic Legion of Decency, so there's gotta be *something* worthwhile about it, right? Well, only if you're a fan of jaw-dropping y lousy movies.

This self-described "fable" begins on a bus to Reno, packed with a mind-warping assortment of stars. There's a traveling salesman (Mel Tormé), a two-bit casino owner and his missus (cocky lil' fuck Mickey Rooney and Fay Spain), ever-simmering Tuesday Weld as teenage runaway Vangie Harper ("Once they called her Bobby Sox. Now they call her Baby Sex"), plus the bus driver (Brit character actor Cecil Kellaway). There's also a couple on the verge of divorce, with B-movie, D-cup bombshell Mamie Van Doren as Evie and a pre-*ADAM 12* "Marty" Milner as Ad. Last but not least, a Vitalis-ized Paul Anka is rock 'n' roller Pinkie Parker, who steers his jalopy with his feet so his hands are free to play his guitar and croon the title tune.

While the beginning is a definite winner, all of that shifts when a flash flood strands these idiots in a rain-swept, symbolically-named pit stop called Paradise, Nevada. Eventually, they're all trapped in a church, as the waters rise and Rooney disses on God. As Ad and Evie sleep, the b&w film stock switches to an ugly "Spectracolor," and we're tossed into a Biblical flashback with Milner and Van Doren playing the lite nudists (Milner wears Speedo sized trunks, while Mamie's platinum blonde tresses are superglued over her ticket-sealers). This is when the pain kicks in.

While Milner frolics through a Disney and-fake Garden of Eden (naming the animals, no less), Eve's appearance only makes his life difficult, since she continually has him rearranging the boulders in their cave. Then, after they bite the apple, Adam gets tipsy and is tempted by Lilith (Fay Spain), with Eve getting jealous. Stoking this tension, Rooney hokes it up as Satan—complete with red longhorns and a straw hat w/horns. Conveniently, this co-director is continually fawned over and fondled by his scantily-dressed "Devil's Farn liars" (including June Wilkinson), who dress up as a baseball team and a jazz quartet. The best is when Rooney squeezes into a dime-store snake costume for his tempting of Eve.

This might sound relatively risqué, but it's anything but. Milner is dorky-as-usual, Mamie lets her physical charms do all of the acting, and the hottest thing in the movie is Weld in a wet sweater. Essentially, we have eight characters in search of quick paychecks, and it's hard to imagine anyone who fell for its lascivious ad campaign not wanting to give Zugsmith a swift kick in the ass afterward.



WICKED, WICKED (J4Hi; 1973).

Throughout the history of cinema showmanship, half-baked technical marketing ploys were continually being devised to reel in moviegoers—from 3-D and 3-projector Cinerama, to POLYESTER's "Odorama" cards. No question, few could beat the sheer annoyance of this psychodrama's "Duo-Vision," which has almost the entire movie shot like a Brian DePalma wet dream—in split-screen (to be precise, there are a few full-screen moments, but only for a quick establishing shot or moment of murder).

The plot of this horror pic is pretty standard, with a killer loose at a California vacation hotel. Wearing a cheap fright mask and brandishing a kitchen knife, he stabs nubile blonde guests, disposes of the bodies, and makes it seem like the ladies simply skipped out on their tabs. Meanwhile, Tiffany Bolling (hot on the heels of THE CANDY SNATCHERS) plays a new resident who's (1) hired to sing at the hotel nightclub, and (2) was once married to hotel detective David Bailey. During a break in the mayhem, Bolling even gets to warble the title song, on-stage ("Wicked, Wicked/That's the ticket.")

In supporting parts, Edd "Kookie" Byrnes (99 SUNSET STRIP) co-stars as a "beach freak" lifeguard; Diane McBain (MARYJANE, THE MINI-SKIRT MOB) has a brief gig as the killer's first on-screen victim, and Scott Brady plays a pig-headed Police Sergeant investigating the disappearances. Meanwhile, the prime suspect is a creepy, trauma-riddled hotel electrician (Randolph Roberts), who lives in secret crevasses of the hotel and does a damned-fine Norman Bates impression.

Much of the time, the split-screen is little more than visual candy, covering up a limp script. Though writer-director Richard L. Dare occasionally hits on an amusing combo (e.g. while a young resident boasts of her glamorous past on one side of the screen, we're privy to a flashback of her barfly stripper roots on the other half), it's hard to imagine any average moviegoer sitting through this, since you're so busy processing both screens at once, it's difficult to just sit back and enjoy the thing. Still, if you've got several beers under the belt (like your's truly), this approach can get pretty amusing, for its business alone. An over-the-top experiment, which, with all of its oddball hotel characters, would also make an appropriate B-feature with Paul Bartel's PRIVATE PARTS.

MEMOIRS OF A FRENCH WHORE [La Dérobade] (Video Vortex; 1979).

Ooh la la! This French slice of sexotation is finally available in an English dubbed version. Directed by Daniel Duval and scripted by Christopher Frank (who later directed the Valerie Kaprisky flesh-feast, L'ANNÉES DES MÉDUSES), this prostitute profile includes every tawdry plot complication you'd find in some "Diary of a Teen Hooker"-styled TV-movie, in addition to nudity aplenty.

The pretty (but scrawny) Miu-Miou stars as Marie, our title tart—but when we first meet her, she's an ordinary gal with a shoe store job. Her occupation takes a change to the World's Oldest when she falls for a handsome broke whose main pastime is pimping. Not realizing that this is a bad sign (I never said the girl was bright), before you can say "Hey, big spender," Marie is going home with middle-aged slob and taking up space at the local cathouse.

Along the way, she's hauled into jail by the vice squad, deals with on-the-job rape, and practices the fine art of arousal on a variety of pathetic and/or sadistic johns. She also makes friends with fellow whorehouse-vet Maïoup (a post-LAST TANGO IN PARIS Maria Schneider). The melodrama rises when Marie meets a nice young man who pays for her services, but only wants to talk with her (Oh no! He likes her for herself! Horrors!), and leaves her desperately wanting to exit The Life.

The film's success rests on the issue of whether we actually care about Marie, or Sophie, or Fanny, or whatever she's being called by her current

First
SOUND
then
COLOR
and now
DUO-VISION

Jack Warner who brought the first all talking picture to the screen says,
**"DUO-VISION MAKES FOR EXCITING ENTERTAINMENT
AS DID THE INTRODUCTION OF SOUND AND COLOR."**



SEE THE HUNTER, SEE THE HUNTED. BOTH AT THE SAME TIME

WICKED, WICKED
TWICE THE TENSION! TWICE THE TERROR!

Starring **DAVID BAILEY · TIFFANY BOLLING · RANDY ROBERTS**

Executive Producer **WILLIAM T. ORR** Written, Produced

and Directed by **RICHARD L. DARE** METROCOLOR



PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
Some material may be inappropriate for children under 10



consumer. While Miu-Miou (GOING PLACES) is relatively appealing, her character is an idiot—not for getting sucked into this situation but for continually being a sucker for her boyfriend's tenuous charms. He repeatedly beats her, she squanders her hard-earned savings on his gambling debts, and the only time he comes in handy is in taking revenge on a pair of ultra-abusive dickhead johns, by forcing one to go down on the other (Ouch!). Clocking in at a far-too-long 111 minutes, this avoids gratuitous sleaziness, and unfortunately, never transcends its all-too-obvious clichés.

SEEDS OF SIN (Something Weird; 1968).

Obvious to the possible brain damage—or more likely, terminal boredom—I bravely waded into this long-unseen effort by Andy Milligan. At his (rare) best, the late Milligan was able to transcend his budgetary and artistic limitations, and created streetwise gems like FLESHPOT ON 42nd STREET. Alas, his best-known flicks (like THE RATS ARE COMING! THE WEREWOLVES ARE HERE!) are only slightly less action-packed than a Tarkovsky. A 1 Nighter. This b&w work falls somewhere in between, offering the worst of both worlds.

At least the movie begins on an energetic note, with a bedroom fivesome. Unfortunately, the characters also get the opportunity to talk (usually a bad sign in a Milligan pic). Then we proceed to a Family Reunion From Hell (aren't they all?), complete with a drunken, wheelchair-bound matron who thinks her entire family is "sick," a hilariously inept Doctor who inserts a

simple IV like he was administering adrenaline to the heart, and a daughter who masturbates to muscle mags and screws her brother-in-law.

Despite all of the family secrets, incest and murder (when a plugged-in radio, conveniently on the edge of the tub, does a Snap, Crackle 'n' Pop routine on a guest), this is so dull that my mind tended to wander for long chunks. Characters strip down to their birthday suits for no reason (*oh, I suddenly need to take a bath*), as Milligan's camera gives it all of the eroticism of a Charles Kuralt report. Servants also plan Mad Mama's demise, with the body count skyrocketing in the final 20 minutes, as every scheming shithole is offered. It only comes to life with the appearance of Buster (Gene Connelly), a military academy reject who's also a fully-blown basketcase dabbling in blackmail, suicide, arson, and homosexuality. Still decked out in his cadet uniform, this four-star freak jumpstarts the film, only to exit just as quickly.

Photographed and directed by Milligan, there's an abrupt, prolonged sex scene inserted every 15 minutes—often with people who never show up in the rest of the movie. Who are these folks? Why are they fucking? Did anyone involved in the production ever think someone would care? In addition, many of the nude scenes never pan up to the actress' face, which makes you realize that even a screen slut doesn't want to be identified in an Andy Milligan film. This offers family dysfunction aplenty, along with burnt-out photography, low-talent perfs. and one band setting. Clocking in at a merciful 78 minutes, it lingers at the bottom of the grandhouse ladder.

JAG MANDIR: THE ECCENTRIC PRIVATE THEATRE OF THE MAHARAJAH OF UDAIPUR (1991).

The films of Werner Herzog have always been graced with a singularly unique vision, full of eccentricity, obsession and epic landscapes. In recent years, Herzog has spent most of his time lensing documentaries which lack the same territory. This feature-length project took Herzog to India, for a one-of-a-kind spectacle steeped in history, culture and art. No surprise, the film never made it to the US.

Meet the beyond-wealthy Maharajah of Udaipur who, as the head of a 1500-year dynasty, decides to show his Crown Prince son the riches of India's artistic heritage—before Disney decides to open up a Ganges theme park. With the aid of Viennese multi-media artist André Heller, 18 months were spent narrowing it down to (only) 2000 of India's most incredible performers,

including dancers, shadow players, magicians, whatever. Then, instead of taking a simple road trip, this guy hauls everyone back to his palace!

First there's a procession around the palace, with the artists hauling huge sculptures and in full, mind-blowing regalia. Fuck Macy's Thanksgiving—this is a *real* parade! Throughout the actual performance, no narration is given (or needed), as we watch pantomime tigers, children balanced atop poles, sword dancers, monkey men, and one masochist who lifts a bowling ball-sized weight with his *eye*! This is a non-stop visual and aural assault—a whirling dueling, leaping event, superbly captured by Herzog and his crew. Meanwhile, the Crown Prince looks as enraptured by this showcase as an American rugrat is by Barney.

Herzog also sprinkles this pageant with tidbits which would sound unbelievable in a fictional film. For example, the Maharajah's paaces are slowing sinking into the lake, and since Jag Mandir is the most endangered of them, that's where the performance is held. Then there's a basketball court-sized mural, made with varnous-colored pollen and spices, and the moment this intricate piece of art is completed, it's instantly destroyed, with the colors swirled together. Herzog somehow crams this insanely extravagant pageant into 83 minutes, and while not for all tastes, it's an amazing achievement as far as I'm concerned. Plus, I'd dearly love to see this on the big screen and with a stomach full of Acid. Now that's entertainment.

BURTON IS 'BLUEBEARD'

He had a **way** with the world's most beautiful, most seductive, most glamorous women

he did away with them.



RAUL WILLY
beautiful body suffocated



KARIN SCHUBERT
beautiful body shot



SYBIL DANNING
NATHALIE DELON
beautiful bodies
chandelivered



VIRNA 1151
beautiful body cultivated





MARILLI TOLO
beautiful body drowned



AGOSTINA BELLI
beautiful body falconetted

JOEY HEATHERTON beautiful body

ALEXANDER SALKIND presents **FRANKIE BURTON** in **BLUE BEARS** Also starring **MAURIE WELCH** with **VERNA CROFT** HEATHLEDGE BELONGE
MARILEE TLO KARRY SCHWARTZ AGOSTINA BELL STEVE DANNING and **JOEY HEATHCOTE** with **ANNE** with **EDWARD HENNES** by **SERGEY**
JAMES LESTER and **WALTER CARPIS** as **The Volcanos** an **EDWARD DARTMOUTH** Film Original Story and Screenplay by **EDWARD DARTMOUTH**
EDWARD DARTMOUTH MARIA PIA FUSCO Music by **EMMO MORRICONE** Publisher **Galester Music** Roma Executive in charge of Production
PIERRE SPINDARINI Executive Producer **EVA SALAZAR** Produced by **ALEXANDER SALKIND** **TECHNICOLOR**  

BLUEBEARD (Luminous; 1972) & **VILLAIN** (Euro. Trash Cinema; 1971).

Trust me, if you want a dose of consummate crappy acting, you don't have to rent the latest Steven Seagal movie. You just simply have to pick through Richard Burton's later career. Mind you, I'm not saying the guy was a bad actor, because given a worthy project, he could be top-notch. But when he wadded nose-deep into a misfire, Burton was the forerunner of Brando-bombs like *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU*. If you need proof, just check out his work in *CANDY*, *HAMMERSMITH IS OUT* or *STAIRCASE*.

For the murder romp **BLUEBEARD**, gouted Burton linked up with the usually-reliable director Edward Dmytryk (in one of his last efforts), producer Alexander Salkind, and a bevy of screen sirens. Set in the '20s, this European period piece desperately tries to look like a class act, but its sleazier agenda continually shines through, with Dickie as the aristocratic Baron Kurt Von Sepper. This guy goes through brides like they were six-packs, but women still flock to him since (1) he's rich and (2) they're too stupid to inquire about his previous marriages. Best of all is the film's psychological silliness, such as

the Baron's impotency and mummified mother

Alas, the supporting sexpots have little to do except look beautiful for five minutes and, one-by-one, end up another notch on Burton's bedpost. Vicky Lisi receives a juicy decapitation by a home guillotine, Sybil Danning and Nathalie Delon are impaled during a lesbian tryst, and there's some fleeting gore when a pet hawk rips out another babe's throat. Of course, Raquel Welch is typecast as a nun (who wears low-cut dresses, recalls her past love affairs, and ends up locked inside a coffin). With all of these ingenious demises, this soon begins to feel like an all-star FRIDAY THE 13TH.

Fans of shitty acting will rejoice, since Joey Heatherton (who had worked with Dmytryk on *WHERE LOVE HAS GONE*) gets the juiciest role. Playing a ditzy American dancer touring Europe with a red, white and blue revue, she marries the Baron and shows off a little nipple in the process, only to discover that hubby's kept all of his ex's on ice in a hidden freezer. Oops! Meanwhile, Burton's acting is so ripe that he's ready to explode, and the results are so campy you can't believe this wasn't *supposed* to be a black comedy. Despite long-winded moments in between the kills, this is a moderately-appealing fiasco, fueled by foul play and fetish

Another now-obscure Richard Burton vehicle was *VILLAIN*, a gritty British gangster tale boasting a couple of sleazy twists. And if wimpy Leonard Maltin calls a film "stomach churning," it undoubtedly deserves a look. Based on the novel "The Burden of Proof" by James Barlow, bleary-eyed Burton stars as a mother-obsessed, vicious gangster named Vic Dakn

Far from your typical mobster, he not only enjoys such day-to-day pleasures as slicing up a stool pigeon with a straight razor, but also takes care of his sickly mama and has a bit of a queer side. His latest scheme is to rob a factory's payroll for a quick £60,000; but this idea quickly turns into a wonderfully chaotic, roadside heist, full of screw-ups, witnesses and flat tires. No surprise, the cops are instantly on their trail, the money mysteriously disappears, and Vic has to deal with one of his less honorable teammates

In supporting roles, Ian McShane plays Wolfie, who Vic has a hard-on (literally) for; Nigel Davenport leads the cops as the tale's Javert; and Fiona Lewis is a randy young bird. Meanwhile, Burton is soft spoken yet wound-tight; and it's only at the end, as everything this brutal fucker has worked and killed for swirls down the loo, that Burton takes off his overacting restraints and loses his cool. First time director Michael Tuchner would follow this up with FEAR IS THE KEY, plus a long list of forgettable TV movies, and while he downplays the homosexual angle, it's mighty clear (fade to black as Burton unbuttons his shirt and McShane lays on the bed). Combining British kitchen sink drama with standard cops 'n' robbers fodder, VILLAIN is a tad slow, but gets points for its interesting details (such as how the crooks don't carry guns during the robbery) and downbeat realism.

THE BEACH GIRLS AND THE MONSTER (Englewood; 1965).

Jon Hall is best known to American Movie Classics viewers for his athletic roles in early flicks such as *HURRICANE* ('37) and *COBRA WOMAN* ('44). This b&w melange of the beach party and monster genres was his final on-screen appearance, as well as his directorial debut. If you've ever thought Franke and Annette's insipid shenanigans were annoying, wait until you meet this movie's cast of beach boneheads, who spend their days dancing, swimming, dying, and putting their audience to sleep.

The fun (I use the term loosely) begins when a seaweed-covered creature stumbles from a Santa Monica cave and kills a grating beach gal named Bunny. While surfer-dude Richard (Arnold Lessing) grieves, aging Hall plays his old fogey father, an oceanographer who lives near the beach with an evil, sexy stepmother Vicki (Sue Casey) and considers surfers "loafers" and "tramps." Despite the murder and all of the monster tracks in the sand, nobody seems too concerned, leading to plenty of dreary comic relief, a beach bongo blast, and some father-son turmoil about Richard's future. Should he be a dour scientist, like Pop, or a happy-go-lucky beach-bum?

Let's add a crippled sculptor with the unique ability of creating busts which look *nothing* like his subject; a suburban home posing as an "Oceanic Research Laboratory", the dullest car chases you'll ever have to endure, and hamhandedly integrated color surfing footage, as characters watch "home movies." Am I forgetting anything? Oh yeah, where's the fucking monster?!

**You are looking at
the face of a Villain.**



Richard Burton "Villain"

**By the time he's ready to kill you,
it's an act of mercy.**

[illegible]

As for our pointy-eared, impossibly-hokey sea creature, it only turns up for a few seconds at a time, and doesn't kill nearly enough people.

Competently lensed by Hail (who later went into the photography biz) and with music by Frank Sinatra Jr. (including tunes like "There's a Monster in the Surf"), this flick is dull, even at 85 minutes. The actors are forgettable, even by beach movie standards, while Hail gives himself the most memorable role, with the dumbest moments. If you're searching for depth and suspense, you'll find more of it in an episode of *Scooby Doo*.



SCARAB [Escarabajos Asesinos] (VSoM; 1982).

Occasionally, I'll check out some obscure movie for the slightest reason, and this supernatural Spanish-production is a prime example. Why? Because it stars Rip Torn, best known to younger moviegoers for *MEN IN BLACK* and *THE LARRY SANDERS SHOW*. Well, this guy definitely has more going for him than that. With a film career beginning with Kazan's *BABY DOLL*, he's appeared in a wealth of twisted arthouse pics, including *TROPIC OF CANCER*, *COMING APART*, *PAYDAY*, and Norman Mailer's *MAIDSTONE*. Often better than his material, early Torn projects are always worth a look.

Straight out of its starting gate, this promises to be a piece of crap, since it features Robert Ginty (*EXTERMINATOR 1 & 2*) in the role of an alcoholic, only-in-the-movies reporter named Jack Murphy. Working in Madrid (even though he barely speaks the language), he's the type of newsman who passes out in the middle of a boring assignment. Thankfully, Ginty wakes up (as does the movie) when the Prime Minister suddenly caps himself in public. When a mysterious nurse (Christina Hachuel) snags a hidden scarab from the body, it gives Murphy another reason to follow the pretty blonde.

Torn first turns up as a crazy fucking scientist named Wilfred Manz, who uses a ceremonial scarab to resurrect (and become) a Bug-Devil God named Khepera. Once successful, Torn gets to saunter about in ceremonial robes and a bad toupee, promising (way too seriously) to "bring back The Dark Ages." And check out his chintzy cavernous digs, which look more like a Spanish Scores, what with its bevy of topless, dancing disciples. And since most of his cast's sets consist of a few fake props (rocks, trees) against a black background they could've filmed his entire section in a bus garage, for all we know.

Turning up in scattered sequences, Torn plays dress-up (with a candy-cane staff and face-paint), gropes several of his groupies, spits up white slop, and transforms a woman's body into some wiggly animal. All of this from a man who performed Tennessee Williams on Broadway. Surrounded with bones, bugs, boobs, and bad lighting, you can't help but wonder, what was this usually-talented guy smoking at the time? At least his scenes are

amusing, unlike the rest of this EuroBore. Thankfully, the final bits pick up as Ginty and the nurse pay Khepera a visit, and deal with assassins on horseback and unwilling human sacrifices.

Sure, director Steven-Charles Jaffe (who wrote *MOTEL HELL*) comes up with a few bizarre moments, but little of this makes any sense. The story is dismal, many sequences are just plain stupid (e.g. the middle-aged guy who points his 'Finger of Death' at Ginty, and things around him blow up), and all of this might've worked better if this pressboud wasn't so patently annoying. Instead, he's the type of schmuck who wouldn't be able to keep a job at Wal-Mart, much less, save humanity.

HORROR STORY [Krvavy Roman] (Video Dungeon; 1994).

First off, the English title of this Czech film is misleading, and a more appropriate translation would be "A Sanguinary Novel." Based on a 1924 book by painter-writer Josef Vachek, it's difficult to accurately convey the complexity of this film, but the closest description would be Guy Maddin meets *FORBIDDEN ZONE*. Writer-director Jaroslav Brabec (earlier, a cinematographer for Vera Chytilová) displays his obvious love for the roots of cinema, and the result is a mind-blowing project thoroughly out of touch with the usual concept of moviemaking.

It begins like an elaborate (often kinky) recreation of an early silent movie, complete with title cards, tinted film stock and Méliès-style special effects, as the long lost brother of Prince Pedro of Barcelona returns, discovers that his lover Ezevira (Klara Jrsakova) is now romancing the elder prince, pulls out a gigantic knife, and slices off her "treacherous" fingers (which gush with all of the believability of a Troma moment). It was at this point I began to wonder just what the hell I'd stumbled upon. Then, it only gets weirder, as Brabec bounces between several parallel stories, encompassing every possible element from that era's horror literature.

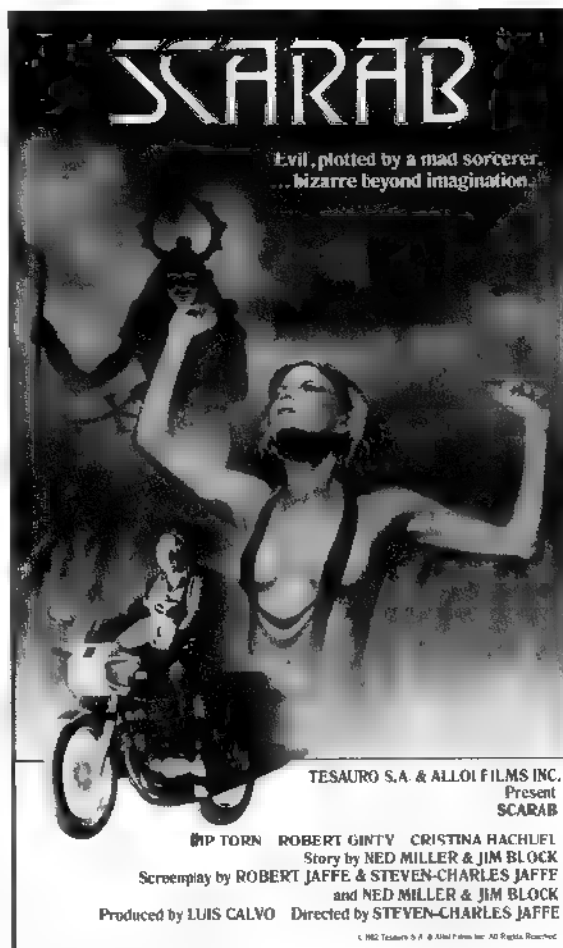
So as Prince Pedro goes increasingly mad, evil church advisor Ignatius plots against him, to find his hidden treasure, a chaste artist named Fragonard (Ondrej Pavelka) recruits a young whore to model for a painting of the Virgin, there's a den of thieves led by a Rasputin-like Master (again, Pavelka), dead characters suddenly return to the story, and a bloodthirsty pirate raid includes several rubbery decaps. Meanwhile, Kuba, an assistant at the Pathological Institute, secretly supplies the church with human corpses—which are used to make soap for the poor. After Ezevira's fingers grow back, she eventually winds up in a hilariously makeshift, Czech-created Honolulu (with natives slightly less convincing than the GILLIGAN'S ISLAND variety).

If this weren't enough, Brabec intersperses scenes of the author (for a third time, Pavelka) at work with his characters eventually invading his reality. Mind you, this is all crammed into only 99 minutes. No quest on this is a crazed hodgepodge, and amidst all of these lurid plot twists, Brabec also charts the ear-y history of cinema. For example, in a sudden postmodern twist, 15 minutes into the movie, an ancient boom mike appears, is noticed by the characters, and the movie switches to crude, crackly sound.

Graced with purposely fake sets and a wealth of deranged ideas (e.g. a hot-air balloon filled with "the gas-filled bladders of the deceased"), to say this is dramatically over-the-top would be an extreme understatement. Though definitely not for everyone, in my case, this remains one of the most gloriously deranged works in recent memory. So rich in detail, so technically inventive, and so agonizingly strange that it's impossible to forget (or adequately describe).

THE DION BROTHERS [a.k.a. The Gravy Train] (1974).

Director Jack Starrett always knew how to give an audience what it wanted, no matter how paltry his budget or how sleazy his genre—from cycle flicks like *RUN, ANGEL, RUN* and *THE LOSERS*, to blaxploitation like *CLEOPATRA JONES* and *SLAUGHTER*, to drive-in classics such as *RACE WITH THE DEVIL*. This wild, white trash



crime drama is his overlooked gem, complete with a top-notch cast and a script co-written by (an un-credited) Terence MacK.

Stacy Keach (at his best when tackling this type of oddball project) and Frederick Forrest star as the little brothers. Calvin (Keach) works on an assembly line, Russell (Forrest) spends his days in the West Virginia mines, and suddenly following the notion that "this country ain't nuthin' but a big ol' gravy train," the pair decides to make money the good old American way—

by stealing it. Joining up with a pack of Washington DC thieves, the Dion's team members include Barry Primus, Richard Romanus, and Denny Miller (who, in 1959's *TARZAN THE APE MAN* was one of the lamest Jungle Heroes of all time).

One successful armored car heist later, the Dion's are backstabbed by their partners, informed on to the cops, and amidst a hail of bullets (and with the aid of a few handy sticks of dynamite), set out on an occasionally-boneheaded

mission to retrieve their hard-earned cut of the stolen loot. A pre-basketcase Margot Kidder plays Primus' girlfriend, and after using her to track down their money, she begs to enjoy their company and goes along for the ride.

At its core, Keach and Forrest display a genuine chemistry together, with plenty of spot-on banter—particularly whenever they delude themselves with get-rich-quick dreams of opening a seafood restaurant called The Blue Grotto. Keach is in top form as the fast-talking brother, while Forrest is goofier, crazier, but just as appealing. Sure, they're dumb as dirt, but in this world of underhanded thieves, the Dion's are the most admirable guys in the picture. In this character-fueled vision, it's the little moments which count, such as Keach stashing his chewing gum behind his ear during dinner, threatening someone with a live lobster, plus a truly inspired finale inside a building as it's being demolished—with the wrecking ball bursting through walls at the most inopportune moments. Full of comic and dramatic twists, this high-spirited low-morale buddy flick is brutal, gritty and thoroughly charming.

WACKO (1981).

Director Greydon Clark has been responsible for some seriously foul smelling movies, such as *BLACK SHAMPOO* and *THE FORBIDDEN DANCE*. In the wake of the original *HALLOWEEN* and all of its bastard offspring, several horror parodies were born (e.g. *STUDENT BODIES*, *SATURDAY THE 14th*), and leave it to Greydon to emerge with the most strident of the lot.

The villain of this flick is a Jack O' Lantern-headed fiend with a killer lawnmower, who escapes from the local asylum, in order to disrupt the Halloween Pumpkin Prom at Alfred Hitchcock High School. Striving to be horror's answer to *AIRPLANE!*, and failing miserably, the recognizable cast makes it worth a laugh, for the embarrassment factor alone.

First, you get future *NEWHART* resident Julia Duffy as Mary, a chaste teen who's still traumatized by her older sister's murder. George Kennedy plays her filthy-minded father (who's first seen playing voyeur on his own daughter) and Stella Stevens is her mom. In supporting roles, Elizabeth Daily is high school tease Bambl, Charles Napier plays the police chief, Jeff Altman is Vice-Principal Harry Palms, plus (a pre-'Dice') Andrew Clay is eather-jacketed greaseball Tony Schiorgini. Playing a robotomized Vinnie Barbarino in his film debut, the 24-year old Clay spits pea soup, sports a makeshift Superman costume to the prom, and (most horrific of all) sings his self-composed theme song, "Schlongini Shuffle."

Finally, who do you call when you need a fat slob who'll (obviously) work cheap? How about Joe Don Baker, since his career was floating face down in the toilet during the early '80s? Here he plays a bloated coffee-chugging detective with a Lawnmower Killer fixa on, and leaving all dignity at home, he dresses in drag, is whipped by a dominatrix, and informs parents of their child's death while wearing a clown suit. To be fair, Baker is actually sort of funny, in the most demeaning way imaginable.

Often straying from its central story, in order to pile on limp n-jokes, subplots include a science teacher named Dr. Moreau, who develops a super-savage-serum for the football team's game against DePalma High. There's also an evil little brother named Damian, while Mary's boyfriend Norman brings his mummified mother to dinner. Dumb as shit and damned proud of it, *WACKO* is more amusing to read about than actually watch.



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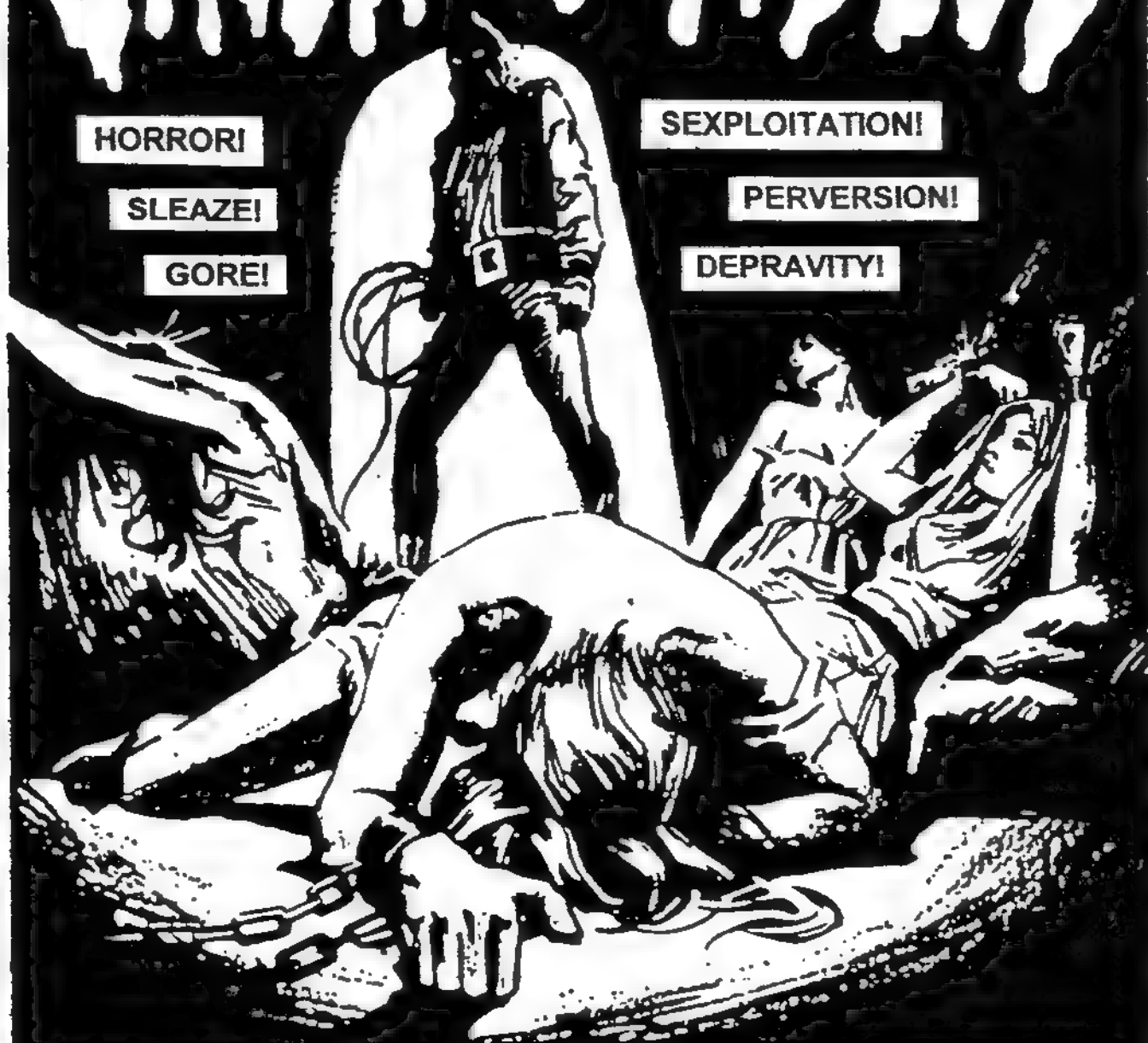
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SHOCK CINEMA TALKS WITH FILM AUTEUR EXTRAORDINAIRE RUSS MEYER

Interview and photographs by J. Scott Wynn

It's a clear, hot May afternoon in Palm Desert, California and Russ Meyer is sorting out empty bottles of wine, scotch and non-alcoholic "near beer" in front of his home. As I pull up, Russ motions to me with his fist in the air and some sort of rallying cry which I unfortunately can't hear because my windows are rolled up. In the driveway sits a large beige pick-up truck with the red RM Films logo emblazoned on it. The doors of the vehicle read "166th Signal Photographic Company, 3rd U.S. Army Newsreel Unit #1, PATTON'S PHOTOGRAPHERS." "Was that your unit during the war?" I ask. "Ah, yes. The war. The great war. Didn't want it to end!" His experience in World War II, which he entered with the Normandy Invasion as his first assignment, is very close to his heart. Apparently those bottles he was recycling were the result of a reunion he had with some war buddies only a few days before.

Soon a young woman as bodacious and blonde as any from an RM flick emerges from the house. Melissa Mounds has been a model and film star for Meyer and is now engaged to him. Melissa's breasts are described in true Meyer fashion in the recent RM catalog as "heroically humongous" among other things. "This is one of the world's greatest strippers," he says as he introduces her. "Oh yeah, right!" she replies bashfully.

Meyer was born in Oakland, California in 1922. The son of a police officer and a nurse, he is a true American original. After serving in the military as a Signal Corp cameraman, he shot industrial films and worked as still photographer for several men's magazines of the late '50s, including Playboy. He then went on to become one of the most critically acclaimed, if not the *only* critically acclaimed film director of his genre. He is the undisputed king of the sexploitation film. In 1959 he paved the way for the so-called "nude cutie" films with *THE IMMORAL MR. TEAS* which starred his old Army pal Bill Teas. *TEAS* was a film about a man who gains the mysterious power to see through all women's clothing after experiencing a dose of anesthesia. It returned a huge profit and, needless to say, caused a bit of controversy among the more conservative members of society.

As the '60s progressed, the "nude cutie" began to sink at the box office and Meyer changed his format a bit by combining over-the-top violence with the over-the-top women he had already been casting, creating the genre that was later known as the "roughie." What followed were some of Meyer's most popular pieces of celluloid with his trade mark buxom "superwomen" usually dominating the world of the men on the screen. Classics like *VIXEN*, *LORNA*, *MUDHONEY*, *UP!*, *BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS* (co-written with Roger Ebert) and *FASTER PUSSYCAT! KILL, KILL!* are technically well crafted pieces of filmmaking, from the in-your-face camerawork to the fast paced, high octane editing, making Meyer one of the most unique auteurs of modern cinema. The stories, often hilarious, satire the insatiable appetite for violence and

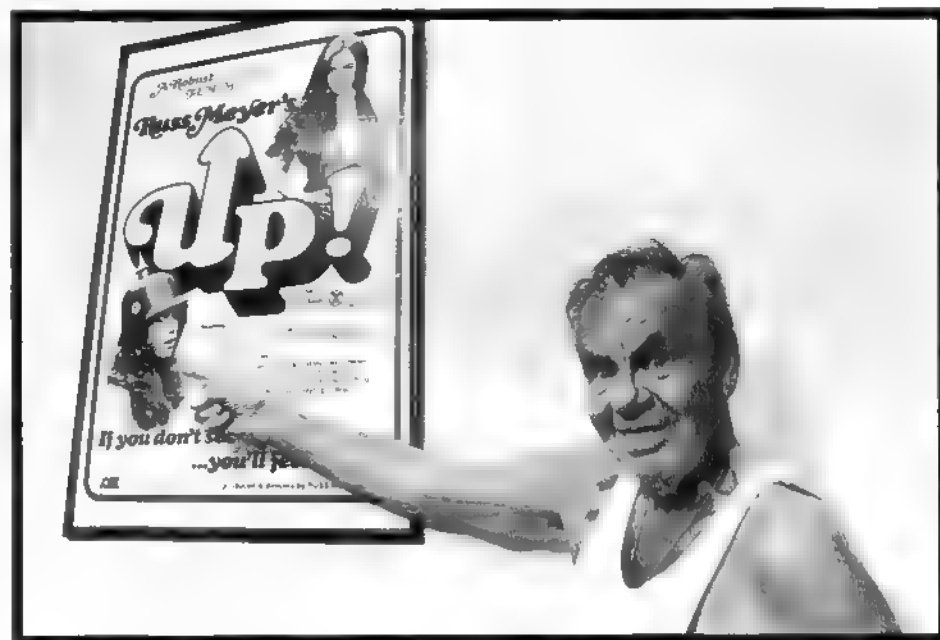
instant gratification in American society.

Meyer gives me a tour through his desert home which includes endless Formica racks of neatly displayed books & magazines that are either about, or include, articles on him and his work. There are also a few magazines that include his early work as a still photographer, as well as scrap books from his days in WWII. A few posters from his well known films, a cubist style painting of himself, several color photos of topless buxom women, and a photograph of his second wife Eve adorn the walls. However, this is not the actual museum of Meyer. The "shrine" as he calls it, is located in his Hollywood home. The

used in his book. Depicting people from every facet of his career, we spread them out on the floor for easy viewing. Sitting on the edge of a coffee table in the living room, Russ describes some of the past, present, and future of his outrageously buxom career.

SC: When did you first pick up a movie camera?

Meyer I did a lot of home movies. Mother bought me an 8mm camera and I shot pictures of the dog animals, things like that. Then in high school I shot pictures of the academy group that were playing football things of that nature.



Russ Meyer in his Palm Desert, California home

true house of Russ, it is decorated with a mind boggling array of beautiful Meyer memorabilia. Large framed bras (yes, framed!) accompanied by photos of their previous buxom owners, reviews, and more movie posters in several different languages hang on the walls and ceiling.

Russ pauses for a moment to answer a call from his Hollywood office while sipping on one of the "near beers." The phones constantly ring here in Palm Desert and in Hollywood. With the long-awaited video re-issue of *BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS* finally hitting the stores in 1993 and the recent UK import re-issue of the soundtrack from the same film, Meyer is still very much in demand by cinephiles everywhere. He currently has 16 films available through his catalog, three volumes of film soundtracks in stores, and a much anticipated written autobiography "A Clean Breast The Lives and Loves of Russ Meyer" in the works.

Before sitting down to chat, Russ breaks out a small box of wallet size, b&w photos that will be

SC: And later on you enlisted in the military as a cameraman?

Meyer No I was bludgeoned into the army. I went up there simply because there was an advertisement in a magazine called *Popular Photography*. It said "Action Camera" (deep intoned voice), that was it. I went and made an application at Eastman Kodak to a man by the name of Emery Hughes. They were trying to get together commercial--uh, not commercial--but I should say *amateur* filmmakers because they knew that they would not have enough people to man the so-called battlefronts, so maybe we can get together a group of amateur cameramen and put them in school at MGM and Universal. And there we had an opportunity to deal with these very fine cameramen, and they were very helpful in that matter. The only thing was they got us involved with 35mm major film cameras which we would never see. Whereas we shot 35 all the time during the war, they were little I-MOs, it was a smaller camera that shot 100 foot

rolls. There's a couple of them on the wall down at Arrowhead (Hollywood home). These cameras were used by newsreel men. People working in Antarctica, The North Pole, no matter where it was. These were Bell and Howell cameras and you wound 'em up, wound 'em up. They weren't 16mm and the good thing about it was based upon this, the newsreel people were all newsreel people and they used 35mm cameras. They didn't know shit from Shinola what 16 was. It only had a small can. 100 feet. You see? Here's how you thread it up. Watch the focus, and guess on, by god, the exposures, then you'd take it over to an agency where planes would take off and fly it into London to the lab and have it processed. Then they'd look at it and say "uh, it's a little sun-sharp here, but keep at it boys, keep shootin' Shoot all you can!" and so on. It was great! But that's how we learned, just through effort. There was no one to teach us. There was no one else. And anytime they got anybody that was an old-time newsreel man he was scared shit of the war. He'd had enough of it. Spain and everything. They'd say "No way, I've been through it before. Why should I stick my neck out? Just get the young guys and point towards Germany and get what you can."

SC: So basically all of your combat photography was on land? you were in there in the field shooting...

Meyer: Yeah, shooting towns. Towns were very important. You gotta get in there and get in with the tanks and the infantry. I stayed with 'em. Landed in Normandy. Landed with the 86th division, see? Or get out on one of those barges that gets you ashore. Loved the war, didn't want it to end.

SC: You mentioned before that you met Ernest Hemingway in France during the war. How did that association come about?

Meyer: After we landed (in France), we just happened to come into the town he was staying in, and there he was. So we introduced ourselves to him. We were lucky to get that because he got us into a bordello and, you know he spent all his time drinking, beating people up. So he said "I'm gonna show you a good time" and took us over to a whore house, and I had never had a woman before and I said to my friend Charlie from Alabama "Did you ever get laid?" and he say "Well not really, but I fucked a chicken." (laughs) Then after that first night of Mr. Hemingway's gift we were into whore houses as fast as we could. France was a great time for us, getting into all those notch houses. Lotta champagne. Clawing at these women (mimes clawing). It was great! It wasn't some thing like you were being a hero or anything. Everybody would go and lay their camera down and walk away if they could go and get laid.

SC: So after the war ended what did you do?

Meyer: I uh, I went home. back to Oakland, I was terrified over the fact, and thought "What am I gonna do? Where am I gonna get a job?" And there were no opportunities to join "News of the Day" or any thing of that nature. But what I did do was get in with an industria. filmmaker who made films for Standard Oil. Associated Oil, things of that nature, and



I was really able to build up a background of shooting pictures in continuity, and I made very good money. They needed cameramen to shoot pictures about how wonderful the Ponderosa is, or trees are. Then they'd send you to the Southern Pacific and you would get right into the room where all the secretaries were and you made it possible for that night's entertainment. You'd be winding up the camera, and showing them the camera, and they would ask "Are you from Hollywood?" "Yes, we're from Hollywood." We were as close to Hollywood as P. Pope. But everybody always found the girls, the secretaries. It's always needful to get carnal pleasure. Don't talk to me about working and getting a lot of great pictures---get laid! Learn more from it.

SC: So how did the Russ Meyer style that we all know come to be?

Meyer: Well, I had a great associate, Don Arnitz, a great still photographer, and he was a still photographer in the war, and I was doing industria. films and wasn't getting anywhere, and I said "Don, I've never shot any stills" and he says "What you don't know you make up with enthusiasm! Just shoot pictures of anything and everybody." So we would ink up with an agency and these pictures would appear in things like "Night and Day" and "Here and Out" and "Gay Paree," all these that you see stashed up here (points to shelves), that was it. They paid good money, made a ton of money. Then I got involved with Playboy and uh.

SC: How did you meet Hefner?

Meyer: Well, he came to me because he heard I was getting girls with large breasts. That's what his

interest was. I had that ability to find them and talk them into it, and so on. Next week Melissa and I will go. He has a party he has invited us to, so I'm close to him.

SC: Do you guys keep in close touch now?

Meyer: No, you don't with Hefner. Your not in close touch with him. Hefner's main thing right now is he's got five women he's fuck ng and he's putting out the magazine. What else can a man do?

SC: What about the wife?

Meyer: Oh the wife has kicked his ass! The children and all that, they had to go out and buy another house for them. They're out at another house next door. She got sick and tired of him gettin' it on. He was livin' the righteous life. Why should he dump a wife and some kids when all he had to do was scratch some broad's back and he'd be right there "at the Y"? Remember that term "at the Y" (does "Y" motion in crotch). Nah, he's a great guy.

SC: How did the ideas for your movies develop?

Meyer: I just continue to do the same movie over and over. Big bosoms and square jaws. Brrng me a bigger girl, I'll shoot another movie. Come up with an idea, I'll shoot another movie. And when that's gone then all of the sudden they start to play in Chicago, and they play for 48 weeks and I come out with \$75,000. That was, that, up there (points to poster on other side of the room) whaddaya call it? VIXEN. That played and played. Never stopped. That's where I met [Roger] Ebert. At that time he could give me a little publicity. Then I brought him into L.A., see?

SC: You brought him with you to 20th Century Fox?

Meyer: Yeah.

SC: So I'm interested in knowing how you developed your relationship with Fox.

Meyer: Well I was asked to come to Fox. They said "let's throw this guy a bone."

SC: Because they liked your earlier stuff?

Meyer: No, no. They didn't like it at all. They liked the fact that I made somewhat of a movie, and there were big girls in it. That's what they wanted. I found it, got it, played the role. That's all I got. Ebert because I knew he was a good writer. He was working for the [Chicago] Sun-Times. But then he would stay with me and my friend Kitten Natividad star of BENEATH THE VALLEY OF THE ULTRA VIXENS) would get him taken care of all the time. Just nail him to the wall. He says "Jesus Christ". Oh yeah, how it started. I had this sumptuous suite, you see? We were doing something for BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS, that was a Fox picture, and they would send girls over for me to look at. And I remember one particular girl that was sent by another who'd done one film that was pretty good and she came over and the first thing she says to me was "Have you seen my body?" "No, I have not seen your body." "May I show you my body?" "Of course," so we go into the back room there, and where every producer had a facility he had a couch. Let no one

doubt that. All of these so-called righteous sons of bitches were all in Hollywood for the sake of gettin' laid and makin' some money. So anyway, I got her in the room there, and every room had a great big divan like that (points to back of room), every major producer or director, he had a couch to jump a girl. So I had one, see? So the girl came in and she says "May I show you my body?" "Yes, you may show me your body," takes all of her clothes off, I says "It's a marvelous body." She puts all her clothes on and I said "How about this associate of mine, Mr. Ebert, may he see your body?" So I says "Ebert you lay down on the couch now. Get your head up. Get one leg up and open up your fly." So the girl comes in and says "Oh, how nice!" Ya know? That same night me and the girl were out in my pool whackin' away at each other. The typical way with major studios, they were all so "important" and "fine" guys. They were the most notorious bastards of them all. So that's how it went. I thought it was a great idea, and I did my job, but if I could get laid I did.

SC: What's the whole story behind BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS and how did you and Ebert develop it?

Meyer: Very simple. Ebert and I had a very close confederacy. We talked about it and said "Let's come up with a better idea" in which we did. We came up with a better idea. He got out of the newspaper. Left for about three, four weeks and we just ground it out. That was it. They gave us a large sum of money, and then he realized he'd have to go back and make a decision on if he wanted to stay with the newspaper or being a screen writer and he decided that he'd thought he had a much better chance at life doing the reviews for the paper. He's still the same way. But he still loves tits. He's freaked out over tits. But his wife watches him. Closely.

SC: Can you tell me a little bit about the story and how you wrote it?

Meyer: Nah, that's dual to sit down and talk about it. We both knew what we wanted to do and we put it down. There was no great thing like "hmmmm (grabs forehead as if in deep thought) write this down, okay, put that in there, now we gotta get a big girl over here, she's gotta walk in there with her blouse opened up. Alright? And then she'll be coming in to your secretary and, well you know, she's a lesbian and the lesbian says "Oh, isn't she lovely?" But everything about a major studio is so complicated full of jeopardy and bullshit, and who's gonna get laid. Oh, there's a lot of good people to work with, but there's nothin' wrong with gettin' laid.

SC: How about your visual ideas, how did they develop?

Meyer: I know those things. Just started thinking along, no big master-minding, just came to me after I had a sausage and eggs one morning, and said "I gotta great idea." It happened when someone farted and said "That's great." That's about it. But the art of the whole thing that really made some sense was the editing. More than anything else because I'm a good editor and that's what I did. I edited the films. And the fact too, of getting things matching, as it were. If you cut from here then you gotta cut over here. It's gotta have that movement, that flow. But all the films were largely made possible because I was doing all those industrial films. Standard Oil, Associated Oil. I was making up all my own stories. They'd wanna know when "Seth" was gonna come in and deliver the mail to "Martha So-and-So" and he gets into a vehicle which is a GMC and drives off, see? And you shoot pictures of all these things.

SC: Can you tell me a little bit about FASTER, PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL! It seems to be your most popular film.

Meyer: FASTER, PUSSYCAT? Well, it seems to be growing at this time, but I think BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS has more, in the long run.

SC: Did you know that recently in a film called AUSTIN POWERS (starring Mike Meyers) they make a reference to when the character "Z-Man" in BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS says "This is my party and it freaks me out"?

"So I says "Ebert, you lay down on the couch now. Get your head up. Get one leg up and open up your fly." So the girl comes in and says "Oh, how nice!""

Meyer: Might of heard, and it doesn't mean a damn to me. Never heard of him. Don't know him or anything. And if he had a line, we'll bless him.

SC: Were there any filmmakers that inspired you at all.

Meyer: None at all. Nobody.

SC: Is there anybody that you like at all. Do you have any favorite filmmakers?

Meyer: Oh, any number of great filmmakers I have great admiration for, but I was not influenced by anybody. I was influenced by my short films, and big girls and things of that nature.

SC: What are some of your favorite films?

Meyer: I don't think about it all. I think my films are the greatest. There's nothing needful for anything but my films. If all the films were taken away we would still have a great deal of pleasure.

SC: What's going on with you now?

Meyer: Nothing. I'm doing a book. It's called "A Clean Breast."

SC: And as far as film, you mentioned earlier a color re-make of FASTER, PUSSYCAT?

Meyer: Yeah, we're doin' FASTER, PUSSYCAT. It's gonna be a exactly the same dialogue. Everybody's gonna say the same things. And use the same script.

SC: Are you going to go for lesser-known people for actors?

Meyer: No people are known. Just women like this (uses hand motion for big breasts). I seek them out and that's what I use.

SC: And when will that be in production?

Meyer: Maybe the end of the year. The book has to be finished first. There will already be people ready to come out with a book on me. We'll not a book, but a film on me by looking at the book. I will be ready to sue everybody of any kind of extrac[ing] things from me. I take great pleasure in suing people.

SC: Has anybody expressed any interest in doing a film documentary about you?

Meyer: Yes, and I don't think that I've found anybody to my knowledge at this given time really that has the same kind of zap that I have. Ya gotta have it. You gotta have this (points to pictures on floor) "bosomania." You gotta believe in it, see?

SC: How would you want a film about your career to look?

Meyer: I wouldn't say. The book has got to all. When you read the book, then someone with the right kind of. I've got three people now, with all the money lined up to make the movie, all set. Important people waiting for it. First I was going to be the director and I don't want to be the director, I would choose the director. Then I will be the editor. I will edit the film, the director will have no say. I will edit it myself. We'll be able to work something out. They're really ready to pound out a ton of money to make the book, and

the film "A Clean Breast" the same title.

SC: I'm always surprised that there are never any Russ Meyer film festivals or retrospectives. I think something like that would be pretty heavily in demand.

Meyer: It's hard to find because the films have been so brutalized, destroyed. And of course I have all the negatives and it's not necessarily gonna happen. I've had good things at the Museum of Modern Art (in New York City) that were great. But the prints are in terrible shape. We're just trying to collect our FASTER PUSSYCAT black & white negs you know, and these agencies now that are releasing films are not capable of handling and caring for them in such a way. Well the whole business has been pretty much hurt bad. It's enough to make you not want to do anything about it.

SC: Do you think at all about what films are like now?

Meyer: I don't go to see films. I'm not interested. I never go.

SC: What do you do here in Palm Desert? Relax and...?

Meyer: No. We don't "relax." We have a good time. I do that and travel about and things like that. I've got plenty of things to do. Counting money and all that sort of thing.

SC: So back when you were creating your largest volume of work in the '60s, did you think that perhaps in 1998 you would have as big a following as you do.

Meyer: No, we just did what we wanted to do. The most gratifying thing though is to have young people like yourself come around and say they enjoy my work.

Later, Russ gives us an exclusive opportunity to have a peek at the "blue lines" or rough draft of his book which when completed, he says, will be an epic three volume set available through mail order only with part of the profits being donated to cancer research. "A Clean Breast: The Lives and Loves of Russ Meyer" is as big or bigger than some of Russ' leading ladies. In it he refers to himself as the "Rura Fellini." "Ah so you do have a favorite filmmaker. Would that be Fellini?" I ask. "No. But he had women with big breasts in his films too." ☺

[Special thanks to Eric Ziemann for pushing the record button.]

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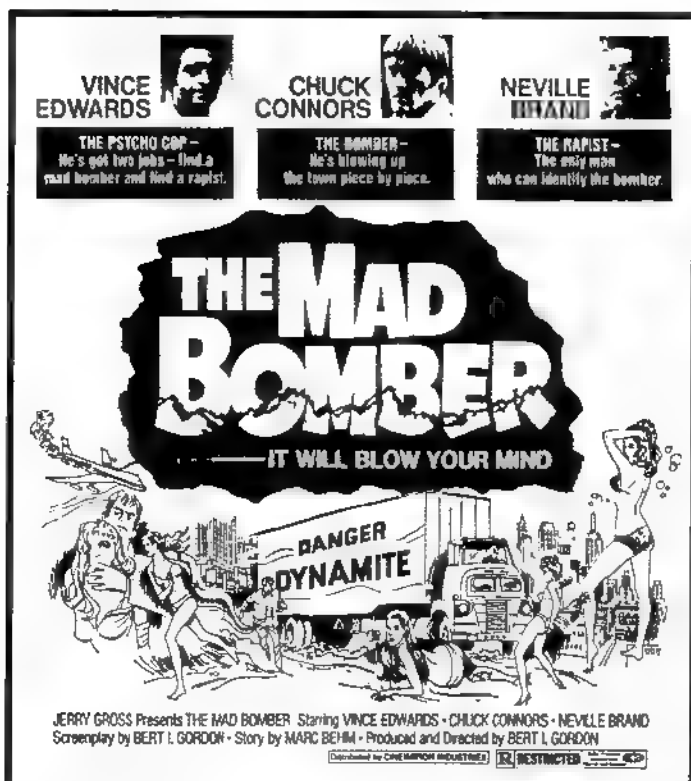
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Note: Please query me with your ideas before sending in completed reviews.

JERRY RENSHAW; Austin, TX.

THE MAD BOMBER (1972). Chuck Connors is The Mad Bomber! Vince Edwards is the Over-The-Top Rogue Cop! Neville Brand is The Rapist! So there ya go. Connors hisses and grimaces his way through his role as a deranged, self-righteous bomber who drops parcels of explosives in a women's lib meeting and a few other choice spots in plastic 70s LA, but not before delivering a stern lecture between clenched teeth. Brand is the sleazy rapist who can provide the cops with the necessary information to catch the bomber, once they make him sit through some Identikit slides. It's a pretty unremarkable hard-boiled thriller from the able hands of Mr. Gordon, but still good for a laugh as the three stars chew up and spit out every available piece of scenery. Actually the most remarkable thing is the way that Neville Brand (second-highest decorated combat vet of WWII) looked by '72. He was never a threat to Clark Gable for matinee-idol status anyway, and the years of hard living had made him look like a mangy old dog by that point (he didn't die until '92, I can't imagine what he had to have looked like by then). His character was in the habit of watching super 8 films of his wife dancing naked, but you only see the extremely-secretarial wife from the shoulders up as she shakes her schoolmarmish booty. Actually, I think my own wife would be pretty flattered by that, but to director Bert I. Gordon that's apparently the height of perversity. It's not great, but **THE MAD BOMBER** is worth a look anyway, just for its crappy TV-movie-gone-to-seed production values if nothing else.



at the other end of the cinematic scale. You'd be hard pressed to find a more amateurish, sloppy piece of narrative filmmaking, ever, period. Problem #1, it takes place in James Ellroy's grimy 50s Hollywood, so why's it called **BROADWAY JUNGLE**? That's the least of the problems here, though, Tucker apparently never realized that elements like lighting, editing, camera angle, shot composition and score are as integral to telling the story as the script is. There's lots of long, pointless shots of people smoking cigarettes, cars driving down streets, reaction shots of other people's faces as characters deliver long passages of dialogue, shots that cut the characters' heads off, etc. etc. After a time it becomes almost Dada, like a Bunuel film (but I don't think that was the intent). The plot is some drawn-out crime drama nonsense about a phony director (self-referential?) and some gangsters, but who the hell cares? It's at times exasperating, and at other times just dull, but it's relentlessly, dumbfoundingly awful. WAY worse than anything the much-maligned Ed Wood ever thought about doing. Something Weird offers up this stinkin' dog part of a movie, and if you've got any guts you'll order it from them. Just make sure you're in the right mood for it, and don't say you weren't warned.

THE TRAM (1972). This curiosity is seldom included in Dario Argento's filmographies, but shows his development in the earlier part of his career. A maintenance worker discovers a girl's body stuffed under the seat of a trolley car; with no witnesses, the police detective is left to find out who murdered her. A quick process of elimination is done, and the trolley's motorman goes to trial for the murder; on reflection, though, the cop sees that the resolution of the case was a bit too tidy and decides to re-open the investigation on his own. At only 50 minutes, **THE TRAM** was originally produced for Italian television, and shows its origins in its TV-production considerations; it was considered to be Argento's "lost film" until Video Search of Miami made it available again. Argento's directorial style is rather subdued compared to other films of his from the period, there's a bit of comic relief (a rarity for Argento) in a crazy man who confessed, and the TV-suspense-movie horn-driven score is a jarring departure from the usual Italian synth-rock of Goblin or the Morricone-mood soundtracks of his movies. The story, though, is seamless and concise (actually a little compressed due to the short running time), with one or two red herrings thrown in for good measure. Actually, the plot is reminiscent of Argento's literary role models like Hammett, Horace McCoy and Cornell Woolrich in its short story-like narrative pace and quick resolution. It's certainly not the best Argento from the period (or even very representative of his work) but **THE TRAM** is still worth a look.

HENRY COVERT; Charlotte, NC.

GARDEN OF TORTURE [Le Jardin des Supplices; Torture Garden] (VSoM, 197?). This French ranty was based on the infamous 1899 novel by Octave Mirbeau (whose **DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID** was filmed by both Renoir and Bunuel), and directed by Christian Gion (who inexplicably went on to helm a turgid kids flick, **HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS**). Gion wreaks havoc with Mirbeau's narrative, but maintains the basic scenario: a jaded diplomat (Michael Palin lookalike Roger Van Hool) sojourns to China, where he becomes obsessed with Clara (Jacqueline Kerry), an implacably cold woman mesmerized by the Chinese art of torture, as conducted in exquisite gardens filled with exotic flowers. Without subtitles, it's hard to tell how much of Mirbeau's political subtext and poetic decadence has been preserved. While following the arc of the novel, Gion whittles down its inventive gore in favor of eroticism, which yields some steamy scenes but lacks the novel's horrific impact. Gion does effectively juxtapose images of sex and death, as in a demented (and humorous) sequence in an erotic Grand Guignol, where two nude Asian cuties stroke a prostrate man's enormous strap on phallus 'til it spews fake jism, then erupts with fake blood. But only the climactic sequence -- where Clara, intoxicated by thoughts of torture, leads our "hero" through the torture garden -- approximates Mirbeau's raw delirium. The film's

BROADWAY JUNGLE (1955). What's the best film ever made? Some say Renoir's 1939 **RULES OF THE GAME**, some say Welles' **CITIZEN KANE**, some probably even say **TITANIC**. Regardless of what the "best" movie might be, Phil (ROBOT MONSTER) Tucker's mid fifties **Broadway Jungle** is clear

strongest asset is its amazing score by Jean Pierre Doering, alternating a stately melody with thronging bells struck during Clara's ecstatic visions of slit throats and defiled corpses. Lacking most of Mirbeau's litany of atrocities, Gion's flick registers as a great missed opportunity, but yields enough sporadically perverse delights of its own to prove essential for admirers of the novel and of deviant cinema.

BLACK JESUS (VSOm, 1971). If this stark, all-but-forgotten Italian-made oddity was marketed as blaxploitation in the US, audiences must've been scratching their heads and dozing in confusion. But this slow-paced and reflective politico-religious parable featuring the late, great Woody Strode (in what must've been his only top-billed role) is immaculately lensed, naturalistic, and powerful, with director Valerio Zurlini embracing the same post-neorealist grit as prime Pasolini. Zurlini's Christian allegory is set in a war-torn modern-day Africa occupied by European forces. Strode plays Maurice Lalube ("Son of Destiny") -- figurehead of a mounting uprising by native Africans; a revolutionary exponent of non-violent resistance and a messiah of sorts whose followers allegedly can't be touched by bullets. Sold out for 100,000 francs by a cloaked Judas (a fellow black, no less), Lalube gains a follower in prison: a white soldier, Arresti (Pasolini vet Franco Citti). After a savage beating, where nails are pounded through his hands, Lalube is delivered over to his final fate, and Zurlini subtly answers the question of Lalube's divine nature. Strode was always criminally underused, and this "lost" gem is a real treat. Standout line: "We're not your monkeys any longer."

DIARY OF AN EROTIC MURDERESS [La Encadenada] (SWV, 1974). Italo-Spanish potboiler starring the exquisite Marisa Mell (*ANGER DIABOLIK*) as a con artist hired as a governess by wealthy Alexander (Richard Conte) to care for his nutso son Mark. Alex falls hard for Mell (well, who wouldn't?), but so does Mark, who plays like a mute version of John Amos. *MARTIN* without the blood-drinking. Mark's deceased mother's diary inspires Mell to dispose of Conte and spit his fortune with Junior. Toss in Alex's illegitimate son come for a chunk of the loot and Mell's estimable charms, and Mark goes completely out of control. Director Manuel Mur Oti strikes one fabulous shot after another, while revving up the plot twists, barbed dialogue, and hijinx in an underground pit lined with the bones of Knights Templar (a nod to the *BLIND DEAD* flicks?), and emerges with a lively mishmash of soapy intrigue and Euro-thriller -- and another celluloid love poem to the late Ms. Mell (who deserves far greater iconic status than she presently enjoys on these shores).

VIOLENT BLOODBATH (1975). Another spotlight for the stunning Marisa Mell. Beneath the hyperbolic title lies a fairly bloodless Spanish gallo from Jorge Grau (*CEREMONIA SANGRANTE*, *LET SLEEPING CORPSES LIE*) that deals with his favorite pet subject, the iniquities of the penal system. Fernando Rey stars as Judge Bataille (named for Georges?), a wealthy older man who can't quite hold the attention of his gorgeous and much younger wife (Rey's made a career out of playing such roles). Patricia (Mell), Bataille's wife, finds her interest veering towards Vargas (Espartaco Santoni), the author of a book espousing liberal views on capital punishment which sharply clash with the judge's hardline "eye for an eye" outlook. A rash of murders, seemingly committed by a killer put to death by Bataille, fuels the plot, but the "twist" ending reveals the irony: Grau's really concerned with the suspense factor runs thin stacked up to prime giallos, but the atmospheric visuals and vertiginous camerawork, along with the ominous throb of Antonio Perez Olea's score and, of course, the presence of Mell, make this worth a look. Not on par with Grau's earlier work, but definitely anticipating the following:

CODE OF HUNTING [Coto de Caza] (1983). This slow-burning tale of legal injustice, class disparity, home invasion, and mob rules maybe Grau's most mature, fully-realized work. Grau challenges us with an unsympathetic female lead (Assumpta Serna, later in Armodovar's *MATADOR*), a well-off

criminal defense attorney whose hyper-liberalism borders on the surreal. Whereas *VIOLENT BLOODBATH* couched its rhetoric in thriller conventions, this film is ground in the grimmer-than-true-life dialectic of self-preservation vs. what passes for "law" and "justice". After a greasy denim 'n' leather clad gang violates her idyllic lake home and murders her husband, Serna still refuses to slacken her bleeding-heart identification with the aggressor, even docilely allowing herself to be chewed out in her own office by a gang member's mad-eyed mother. Her mother-in-law is enraged over Serna's indifference, and even her young son is craving revenge, using his dad's favorite comic strip character, the Phantom, as a gun-toting role model.

Grau's carefully measured direction leads the film inexorably towards its sanguinary finale, compellingly spinning his themes to their terminal point in a painfully protracted climax filled with the retribution the viewer's been clamoring for in the previous 2 hours. Serna learns, up close and personal, her error in empathizing with street scum, as the hoods rape her, slay her mother-in-law, and, in a quick but notoriously flinch-inducing scene, set a torch to her genitals! -- before getting their comeuppance, Phantom style, at the hands of the young boy. Grau pushes all the right buttons, plying the outrage and providing no catharsis until the very bitter end (when you're too damn numb and shattered to fully dig it).

THE SIN SYNDICATE: The Story of the Zero Girls (SWV, 1966). More vile tripe from Michael and Roberta Findlay, the same demented couple that set loose the misogynistic "Flesh Trilogy" and über-sleaze touchstone *SNUFF* on an unsuspecting world. *SIN SYNDICATE* charts the trajectory of four "Zero Girls" ("No present, and the future even less. Nothing Zero"), including superfine sex-ploitation siren Darlene Bennett -- hard-luck chicks roped into a maze of rape, torture, and prostitution by The Syndicate, an international white slavery ring. This minor, low-rent dive into degradation bears all the hallmarks of Michael Findlay's threadbare direction: inept async dubbing, slack sets (a "Senate hearing on the Syndicate" is shot in someone's den library with dubbed-in "crowd noise"), and

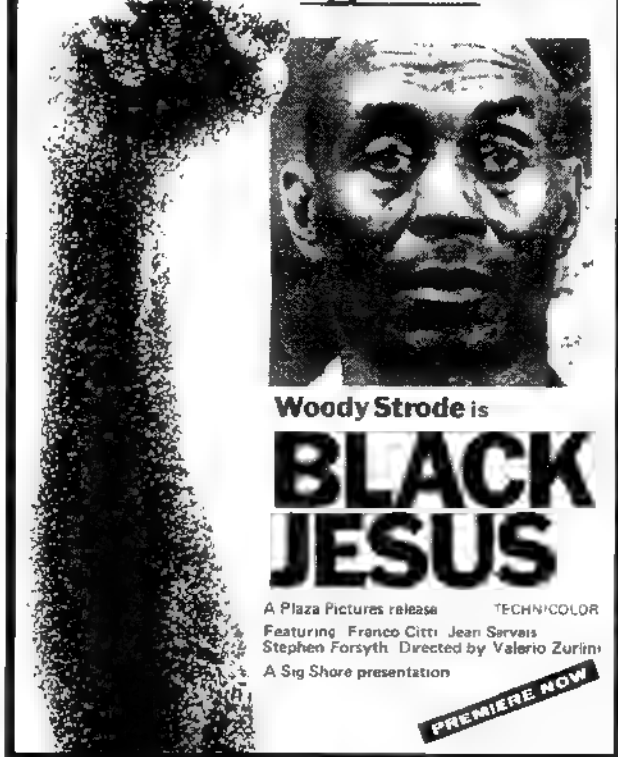
timekilling non-sequitur stock footage. On the upside, the cheapness is redeemed by the Zero Girls' intensely gritty narration, the chiaroscuro charms of the B&W photography, and a swanky jazz soundtrack (with some ragas thrown in for the belly-dancing scene). Seedy slime from the underbelly of '60s NYC, brimming with illicit acts and violation of the female form (though mild by jaded '90s standards) and poured into a smutty melodrama -- call it "sociopathos" -- as only the fabulous, felonious Findlays could deliver!

GREG WALTERS; Tucson, AZ.

THE LAST EXPERIENCE (1970). If you're a fan of Jimi Hendrix, then you've seen both of the soundtracks to this film, that jittered the import bins of record shops through the '70s. Only one problem: The film was never released because of legal hassles caused by Jimi's death. I managed to pick up a bootleg copy at a recent rare record convention. Much of the movie is devoted to the last English concert performed by the original Jimi Hendrix Experience, at the Royal Albert Hall, in London on February 24, 1969. Also included is some backstage footage showing the tension within the group, culminating in the band splitting up for good some 5 months later. An essential purchase for Jimi fans, if you can find it!

PUSANG ITEM (1959). Schlockmeister Ciro Santiago's first film as a director. In the 19th century, a man is cursed to become a half man/half cat creature. He can only break the spell by performing various acts of self-sacrifice. This he does by being given nine lives. Actually, a pretty good film, considering his recent track record. Santiago shows a definite Japanese influence in the film. Makes you wonder why he directs some of the most boring movies today. I think he should have stuck to being exclusively a producer, as he did with *THE BLOOD DRINKERS*, a persona guilty pleasure

"He who ain't with me
-is against me."





The Hit Man never stops till he scores.

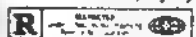
SITTING TARGET

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER Presents

"SITTING TARGET" Starring OLIVER REED
JILL ST. JOHN IAN Mc SHANE

EDWARD WOODWARD • FRANK FINLAY

Screenplay by ALEXANDER JACOBS • Produced by BARRY KULICK



Directed by DOUGLAS HICKOX • METROCOLOR • MGM



REALTIME (1982) An experimental variation of TRON, made the same year West German directors Hellmuth Costard and Jürgen Ebert have a man transported into a computer via a space warp, where he enters a program based on aerial photos. A synthetic landscape so to say. The man has various adventures and finally becomes one with space and time. Or something like that. It's hard to tell, because the story travels in circles and just when you think a scene ends, it starts up again ad infinitum. The film seems to concern free will, chance and determination, but who really knows!! Definitely watch this one on your favorite drug and it might start to make some sense.

LIBRIANNA (1979). Billed as the "first erotic adult motion picture ever filmed in Russia" and directed by members of the secret Russian underground, this softcore film was actually made in the good old U.S. of A. An L.S. clone lords over a gulag in Siberia and experiments on and beds male captives. She has a giant gorilla who helps. Stock shots of Red Square represent Moscow. All of the sex scenes were obviously shot on sets in America. An amazing mess.

BODY LOVE (1976). Here is one of the masterpieces of French Porn. A young girl on the eve of her 18th birthday, plans an orgy to celebrate. Along the way, we watch the sexual activities of her household, culminating in the orgy itself. What makes this a cut above most Euro porn is the pounding synthesizer soundtrack by, of all people, Klaus Schulze. He's not listed in the credits, but I've had the

soundtrack album for years. Also of note is director Lasse Braun (real name Alberto Ferro), who also directed FRENCH BLUE and SENSATIONS. This is his best film by far. If you like your porn arty and sophisticated, he is the director to seek out. Followed by BODY LOVE 2 the following year.

THE BODY (1970). We go from Body Love to The Body itself, as we watch various bodily functions performed in microscopic detail, in this innovative, for the time, medical documentary. Mostly remembered today because of the soundtrack by Pink Floyd's Roger Waters and classical conductor Ron Geesin. Waters even gets to narrate a scene in the film. Directed by Roy Battersby, this is an interesting obscurity, recommended to Pink Floyd fans and future doctors alike.

Olly's first reaction is to put his hand straight through the glass partition and try to strangle her! After this failed attempt, swearing to get her, he breaks out of jail with fellow inmate Ian MacShane and tracks her down. The prison escape is suspensefully handled, and the subsequent cat-and-mouse games make great use of London locations that rarely make it onto celluloid. Hickox constantly surprises with his compositions and rapid-fire editing and doesn't pull any punches as far as the violence is concerned, and the there's-top-notch support from Edward Woodward (THE WICKER MAN) as the cop who originally nabbed Reed, and Mike Pratt (of RANDALL AND HOPKIRK (DECEASED) fame) as the screw who turns a blind eye during the break out.

SVART LUCIA [THE PREMONITION] (1992). Not too many genre films from Sweden make their way overseas so this offering serves as evidence that the country does have more than Bergman to offer. Blonde Tova Magnusson (who looks a little like Jennie Garth) is a student mildly obsessed with her literature teacher. Following him around at night the realization dawns on her that the stories she writes (dreams?) about him appear to turn into reality suggesting he may be guilty of the murder of a young woman. Director Rume Hammerich shows promise, disconcerting the viewer with bizarre happenings such as the discovery of a dismembered cat, and a bowl of fruit crawling with maggots, as well as Magnusson's haunting glimpses of what may or may not be about to happen, but he fails to join the dots and make the film into a fully cohesive whole leaving the viewer out in the cold dark Swedish night.

GIRLS IN PRISON (1994). Directed by John McNaughton from a script co-authored by Sam Fuller, expectations could hardly be higher, but like most of these Showtime revisits to 50's b-pic territory, GIRLS IN PRISON is a major letdown. Sharing only its title with the Edward L. Cahn's AIP flick this women-in-prison movie takes an eon to even get its leads behind bars (Missy Crider is a budding country-and-western singer framed for the murder of a record company boss) and even when it does, appears reluctant to fully immerse itself in the most exploitable genre around. McNaughton's recent WILD THINGS was a lot more fun. Okay, so incarcerated lesbian script-writer Lone Skye goes topless for a quick snog, and villainess Anne Heche also strips off for a shower, but in truth, it's dull, dull, dull all the way, and hard to tell if it's intended to be taken seriously or was meant to be a satire.

FOX HUNTER (1995). After starring in BLACK CAT, a Hong Kong remake of NIKITA, many predicted a bright future for Jade Leung, but due to a succession of duds she never rose to the heights she might have. The one exception is FOX HUNTER, directed by Stephen Tung (action director on several of John Woo's pics and helmer of the recent disappointing Jet Li flick, HITMAN), in which Leung plays a HK cop who, with the reluctant aid of a cowardly pimp (Jordan Chan in fine comedic form), journeys to Mainland China to apprehend a vicious criminal. With hardly a breather between successive rounds of gunplay and fighting, this is a massively enjoyable action movie. Leung looks fabulous and has all the right moves; what's more she gives a nicely rounded performance as the driven policewoman making for a memorable double-act with Chan; and underneath the humor one senses genuine characters and feelings, elevating the film well above routine.

BATTLE COP (19—). Or "Body Battle Cop" as the laserdisc sleeve to this Japanese gender-switch on ROBOCOP calls it. Six months after narrowly escaping a terrorist explosion at the National Scientific Laboratory, a former champion tennis player returns, clad in metal and armed to the teeth, to seek revenge on the perpetrators. This plays like a live-act on manga, with the characters being strictly one-dimensional, though neither the cast nor the action is very animated. A few shots are taken directly from Verhoeven's original but there's none of the invention, wit or dynamism, and the uninspired handling prevents BATTLE COP from achieving cultdom, but it is cheap and cheerful and the lack of subtitles on the Japanese LD (which also includes some behind-the-scenes footage and out-takes) was rarely noticed during the appreciably brief 81 minute running time.



the body

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER presents
an ANGLO-EMI film **THE BODY**
Produced by TONY GARNETT • Directed by
ROY BATTERSBY • ANGLO-EMI film distributed
by ANGLO-EMI Film Distributors Ltd.
Technicolor®

KENDRICK HALL CINEMA
7th AVENUE & 54th STREET
PL. 1, 2, 3
12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

NOTE: Because of the special nature
of this film, and its celebration
of the joys of birth, all
expectant mothers are invited FREE
to any performance TOMORROW.

MILES WOOD, Hong Kong.

SITTING TARGET (1972). With GET CARTER finally getting its dues, film folk have now started championing other hard-boiled British crime movies as neglected seventies classics. While, to be honest, the likes of VILLAIN hardly warrant all the attention, SITTING TARGET, by THEATRE OF BLOOD helmer Douglas Hickox, which so far seems to have missed out, certainly deserves another look. Oliver Reed, as out-of-control as in real life after a few pints, is the con whose wife (Jill St. John) finally decides to pay him a visit after five months inside, only to inform him she's pregnant and wants a divorce.

TOM FITZGERALD; San Francisco, CA.

ACID-DELIRIO DEI SENSI (1968). Italy gets into the LSD craze. You know where this one's coming from when the first shot has a guy cutting up his face while shaving on acid. I don't speak Italian, but with somebody dosing every few minutes, who cares about the plot. LOTS of great trip scenes, wide-angle, kaleidoscopic shots of people freaking out; you know, a naked guy in the fetal position, etc. All to a typically groovy and spacey soundtrack. And these folks really know how to throw a party, as in the end, when a car drives right into a club, the band smashes their instruments and a weirdo with a plastic bag over his head covers a nude girl with whipped cream. This all happens at a delicious pace with flashing colors and pounding music as folks strip and make out. But of course living like this can't be all fun, and the prerequisite suicides and car accidents are shown to be the ultimate result from dropping a cube.

WONDERWALL (1968). Another relic from the swinging 60's. Best remembered, if at all, for George Harrison's Indian-flavored psyche soundtrack. A eccentric, withdrawn chemist, Jack McGowan, finds a hole in his wall allowing him to peer into the lives of the neighboring flat. He sees the melodrama of a fashion model, Jane Birkin, and her rock star boyfriend. McGowan becomes obsessed as he watches the beautiful people and their glamorous world of parties and mysticism, a marked contrast to his secluded existence. There's little dialogue and much druggy visuals as he escapes his dreary isolation for exotic daydreams. And with the cosmic ending inside a telescope, it's kinda like a Camaby Street ERASERHEAD, if that's imaginable.



AMAZING GRACE (1974). Senior citizen blaxploitation? Not really, but this pic's heroine is Moms Mabley, the octogenarian first lady of black comedy. Other black showbiz veterans, Butterfly McQueen, Stepin Fetchit and Slappy White, also star. Mom's righteously socks it to the honky mayor of Baltimore and motivates the black community to vote for a brother. With her distinctive raspy growl, most of Moms' dialogue is almost indecipherable and occasionally subtitles would help. One line that does come thru: "You're the breast, thighs and dark meat of God's great chicken." In the end, Moms declares she's going to D.C. and straighten up the White House. Right on, Moms!

80 BLOCKS FROM TIFFANY'S (1979). Forget THE WARRIORS, this is the real deal. One summer, Gary Wers, the director of SNL film skits, took his camera uptown and documented street life in the South Bronx. He came back with this unpretentious, entertaining chronicle of a couple black and Puerto Rican gangs—the Savage Nomads and the Savage Skulls. Meet "Jamal" the king of talkin' shit, "Crazy Joe" President of the Nomads, "D.S.R." a soft-spoken sociopath, and "Frankenstein" who slurs through inner city stories,

drunk and dusted. Visit "Fly's" homemade prison cell where his fellow Nomads are sent when they violate gang law. Listen while "Heavy," the articulate, super cool ex-pimp and numbers runner, recounts the glory days of his Gentleman Club. Also along the way, memories of looting during the '77 black-out, karate class, horseshit cops, hookers, re-enactments of rap-offs and a funky block party.

THE GREAT HOLLYWOOD RAPE-SLAUGHTER (1972). What a title! What a fucked-up movie! The illness starts right off the bat with the screening of a film student's experimental short -- quickcuts between a bloody fight and a couple schtupping (an editing technique W.S. Burroughs always recommended for brain damaging). Cut to a folkgroup singing as shots of the lead singer (billed falsely in the trailer as Linda Ronstadt) being strangled by a fat slob. The student moves to Hollywood and he's hired by a seazy producer to make a cheapie skin flick. His experiences are a realistic and revealing peek inside the early 70's porn industry. All hell breaks loose though at the end, when he grabs a shotgun, dresses up like Billy Jack(?) and becomes a moralizing, avenging angel of death. He shoots everybody at an orgy and rides off on his motorcycle with his dead wife on a crucifix riding along.

THE NAKED APE (1973). I've not seen this Playboy-produced educational oddity based on Desmond Morris' pop anthropology bestseller. But judging from the soundtrack and photos it looks like a curious, amusing mess. Johnny Crawford, child star of TV's THE RIFLEMAN, stars as a college student facing the draft. He also has the hots for Victoria Principal, a girl from his "sexual behavior of the modern ape" class. Both have nude scenes. Popping up between the live action, there's animation by Chuck Swenson (200 MOTELS) illustrating the evolution of man. At one point a confused Neanderthal couple run around downtown Chicago and get cited for public nudity. A critical and financial disaster, this was Hef's last foray into moviemaking.

SEAN McELROY; Springfield, IL.

VICE SQUAD (1982). Before churning out brain dead Hollywood slop like POLTERGEIST 3, gutter-auteur Gary Sherman crafted a couple of pitch-black low budget masterpieces—the atmospheric DEAD AND BURIED (1981) and the squirm-inducing VICE SQUAD. Straight-to-tape phenom Wings Hauser (in his film debut) stars as Ramrod, a gorilla pimp with a penchant for Joe Buck-style outfits. When he kills a pre-MTV Nina Blackwood during a savage coat hanger beating, it's up to Times Square hooker Princess (Season Hubley) to go undercover for the cops to get the goods on the guy. It's an admittedly standard plot, but Sherman loads this film with all of the saturated colors and seedy thrills of a parking lot carnival. Fine performances all around, especially Hubley, who looks legitimately strung out, and Hauser, who even croons the theme song ("Neon Slime"). This movie is guaranteed to make you want to take a shower.

TRICK OR TREAT (1986). Taking full advantage of his summer break from playing Skippy on FAMILY TIES, Marc Price played against type (kind of) in this oddity from sometimes director Charles Martin Smith (the dork from AMERICAN GRAFFITI). As a chronically bullied metal head, Price seeks guidance from his favorite dead rock star, who he believes is speaking to him through back-masked record messages. When the advice helps him outsmart his tormentors (including MELROSE PLACE token gay, Doug Savant), Skippy begins to cultivate low-rent black magic powers—like the ability to make jack o' lanterns explode. A baffling amount of restraint by Smith keeps this from reaching its full stoner-geek glory, but some viewers will get nostalgically misty-eyed during the backwards message scenes—anyone with a pile of ruined record needies and bongwater carpet stains can relate. Cameos by Gene Simmons and Ozzy Osbourne add to the fun, but to enjoy this gem to the fullest extent, you'd better up your alcohol dosage from malt liquor to bourbon.

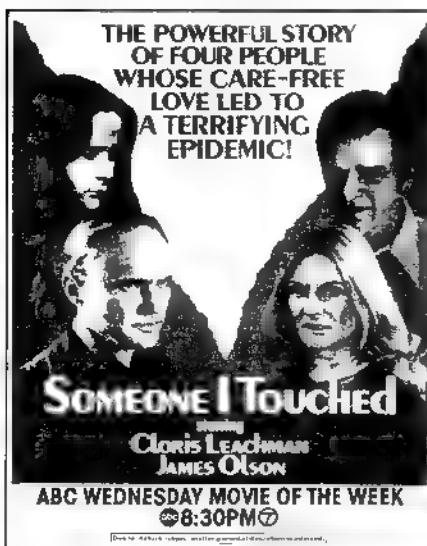
ONE DARK NIGHT (1983). Here's a genre that needs to come back, the idiotic dead teenager horror flick. I'm not talking about expensive and "clever" fright films like SCREAM. I want a revival of movies like DEAD KIDS, or better yet, ONE DARK NIGHT—movies that look like they were written and shot over the course of a lazy afternoon and proudly wear their sheer amateurishness like a merit badge. This one stars a young Meg Tilly as Julie, a "good girl" that desperately wants to join a lavender satin jacket-wearing deb gang called "The Sisters." Initiation rites involve spending the night in a (decidedly unspooky) mausoleum, where a notorious "psychic vampire" (don't ask) has just been laid to rest. Meanwhile, the psychic's daughter (Robin Evans, who looks like a female Jeremy Irons—no kidding) discovers that her father plans to return from the dead and run amok. The zombie psychic (using blue lightning shot from his eyes) reanimates an army of ghouls who proceed to eat the bad "Sisters," or something like that. It's kind of hard to tell, because director Tom McLoughlin decided to use mannequins for the zombies instead of actual actors, so the attack scenes involve what appears to be an off-screen crew member tossing the motionless bodies on top of the screaming girls. Still, I

enjoyed the hell out of this film, especially whenever Adam West showed up to spout some of his ridiculous dialogue ("Say fella, how about you get off my lawn?") You gotta love a movie where people smoke joints out of feathery roach clips and the boom mic shows up in about half of the shots. Top notch.

GERARD ALEXANDER; Australia. A VACATION IN HELL (1979). This David Greene helmed Feminist Manfiasco is sure to try the patience of even the hardiest tele-movie freaks. Starring Priscilla Barnes (TEXAS DE TOUR), Andrea Marcovici (THE HAND), Barbara Feldon ("99"), Maureen McCormick (Marcia Brady) and Michael Brandon (having just cut his sleaze mode in HITCH-HIKE with David Hess), it tells a harrowing tale of survival in the jungles of Hawaii?? As the film begins, we watch as two heavily mascara'd natives prepare to become Men. Just around the reef however, is Cub Horizon, a resort for wayward bikinis from the looks of things. Brandon invites the chronically vain Ms. Barnes for a raft ride. She brings her new friends with her and naturally the raft sinks and they have to swim ashore. They decide to walk back to the club, but they must voyage through the Jungle. They find freshly skinned pig skulls and a wimpy wildcat before setting camp. A slow motion fire-side dance leads to the attempted robbery of Ms. Barnes' mirror, for which the natives slain. They all kinda feel guilty but blame Brandon for failing as deep whilst on guard duty. Ms. Barnes admits "I can't think without my makeup." When the group is confronted by the only other native on the island, Brandon shoots himself in the foot, literally. Brandon is dropped into a waterfall by the clumsy girls, but then one of them falls off a cliff avoiding the native, whom we learn in the touching finale, only wanted his friend's necklace back. So if you're looking for thrills, go and watch the grass grow instead.

SOMEONE I TOUCHED (1975). Cloris Leachman stars and sings the theme song to this by-the-numbers Message movie directed by Lou Antonio. Andy Robinson (DIRTY HARRY) plays a Public Health Department worker who informs teenager Terry that she has syphilis. And could she tell him the names of all the people she's slept with in the past 6 months, thanks. James Olson (back to Earth since MOON ZERO TWO) is Ms. Leachman's husband, and also had a fling with Terry, not long ago. Complications arise like dead skin when Leachman is overjoyed with being pregnant and then discovers that she

has syphilis too. However, it seems she didn't get it from her husband, but from her fling with her boss, played by a straight-faced Kenneth Mars (THE PRODUCERS). Poor Terry gets called a tramp by her single mum because of her condition. In the heart-warming resolution, she is told by Olson, that it was HE that gave her clap, not the other way around, so she smiles, not feeling cheap and dirty anymore. Leachman doesn't lose her baby and all is swell with the world, except that one person develops syphilis every 15 seconds in the United States. So be careful, huh?



DIARY OF A TEENAGE HITCHHIKER (1979). Ted Post (MAGNUM FORCE) directed this excuse for a "social issue" tele-movie which tries to dissuade all those innocents out there from using their thumbs as a means of transport. The cast is pure Retro inferno: Charlene Tilton, just out of DALLAS, plays Julie, a teen looking for a future outside her seaside town of Santa Luisa. Dick Van Patten, sentenced to play understanding father figures since his stint in EIGHT IS ENOUGH, plays her understanding father. Katherine Hemond (SOAP) is her confused mother. Christopher Knight, obviously missing his Brady family, plays Nick, Julie's boyfriend. K-Tel Disco music is perpetually blaring from the soundtrack, sometimes not waiting for the characters to finish speaking. The movie starts in the traditional Scare film manner by quoting statistics about the number of hitchhikers raped or murdered each year. Julie is at the beach with her friends, Cathy and Dana, talking about losing their virginity when the radio interrupts them with the news that another girl was found dead the previous night. Not a armed, Julie hitches a ride to her new job and the driver pretends that he is going to kidnap her, so that

he can then lecture her on the evils of hitching. Fun guy, huh? Julie's new friend, Francine, hitches a ride and the guy offers her money for sex, but she turns him down. Well, she is the rich one in her circle of friends so she probably didn't need the cash, right? There is also a black car cruising around, photographed a la DUEL to instill that extra suspense we all crave. Next, it's Cathy's turn to hitch, and wouldn't you know it, she's picked a sung-assed rapist for her ride. As her friends visit Cathy, who's had a miscarriage as a result of the attack, they discuss how they would deal with a rapist if it happened to them. Truly a sensitive group of kids. Julie gets picked up at her diner by Rod, and romance blossoms, even though her parents hint that he's a little old for her. But he is an architect. And he does care about Julie's sculpting ambitions. Dana is also given a ride by Mr. Sunglasses but she consents to have sex with him and runs his whole rape scenario. As a result, both of them die in a suicidal collision with a truck. Life is funny that way. Julie, proving once and for all that statistics don't mean a thing, gets a ride with the guy in the black car, another rapist, of course, as nearly all men are in this masterpiece of parental guidance. Fortunately for Julie, she uses one of her sculptures to defeat her abductor. The final shots show Julie's younger sister, Trish, hitching her first ride. Well Julie had run out of friends to be victims by that point in the film, so it makes sense, doesn't it?

CHRIS VAILLANCOURT; Wilmington, MA.

KUNOICHI NINPO [FEMALE NINJA] (1964). The debut feature from Toei action master Sadao Nakajima is a wild, highly stylized comedy poking fun at the ninja film. A beautiful female ninja clan battle an all-male clan for possession of a rare treasure. The lead male can assume the form of a woman, leading to plenty of lesbian scenes, and did I mention one of the heroines can turn a man into a pig if he suckles her breasts? Nakajima films all this in a highly theatrical fashion, with artificial sets, bright colors and a finale that resembles a blood-soaked dance number.

VIOLENT STREET (1974). Imagine David Lynch and Brian DePalma collaborating on a yakuza film, and you get some idea of the levels of derangement this lost masterpiece reaches. Directed by the great Hideo Gosha (GOYOKIN), the film's plot is your standard kidnapping-gone-wrong. But who cares about plot, when you have an all-star cast (Tetsuo Tamba, Noboru Ando, Akira Kobayashi, Bunta Sugawara), Flamenco dancing, shoot-outs in a mannequin-strewn junkyard, Bunta whacking gangsters with a shotgun, and the oddest hitman duo to hit the screen—a bald goon with a parrot and a beautiful transvestite with a straight razor. By the time the film reaches its suitably bizarre climax in an abandoned chicken coop, your head will be reeling. Well worth seeking out.

AH! FLOWER CHEERLEADERS (1976). This Japanese ranty, based on a popular and long-running adult manga, is supposed to be a comedy about a squad of all-male cheerleaders at college, yet more often comes off as a Japanese version of *FULL METAL JACKET*. Most of the running time and humor comes from the hapless cheerleaders being beaten, harassed and tortured by their cartoonish superiors. Director Chusei Sone balances his film between gritty realism and stylized cartooniness, and manages to subvert most of the clichés of the college comedy, complete with a melancholy but realistic ending. Followed by two sequels, and in 1996, a remake

HEAVEN & EARTH MAGIC (1964). Harry Smith was less an animator than a self-proclaimed "alchemist," and while his films aren't well-known outside the avant-garde circle, he created some of the most amazing, haunting animated films of all time. This is his masterpiece, an epic involving dentistry, Egyptian legends, a dog with a watermelon on its head, and outer space, all done with no dialogue, white cut-out figures from old magazines shuffling against a black background, and a soundtrack that ranges from the soothingly ambient to the painfully noisy. At times reminiscent of chalkboard drawings, Smith's mind-boggling masterpiece is trance-inducing and amazing. Available from Mystic Fire Video.

TOO MANY WAYS TO BE NO. 1 (1996). One of the most acclaimed of the newest Hong Kong "new wave," this feature from Wai Kai-Fai (*PEACE HOTEL*) wears its influences in plain view, yet is still a stunning achievement. Sending up the HK genre of glitzy films about triad (gangster) kids, Wai focuses on a 30 year old loser with bad luck and no friends. Wai maps the two different yet equally destructive routes his hero's life could take, depending if he accompanies his pathetic gang to mainland China or heads off by himself to Taiwan. With its painful violence, crazed camerawork (one pivotal scene is shot entirely upside-down!), garish colors and time-hopping narrative, *TOO MANY WAYS* comes off as Kieslowski meets Wong Kar-Wai. And while some of the "homages" are closer to rip-offs (a scene in a karaoke bar copies directly from Takeshi Kitano's *BOILING POINT*) this is still one of the most exciting and disturbing films to come out of HK in recent years.

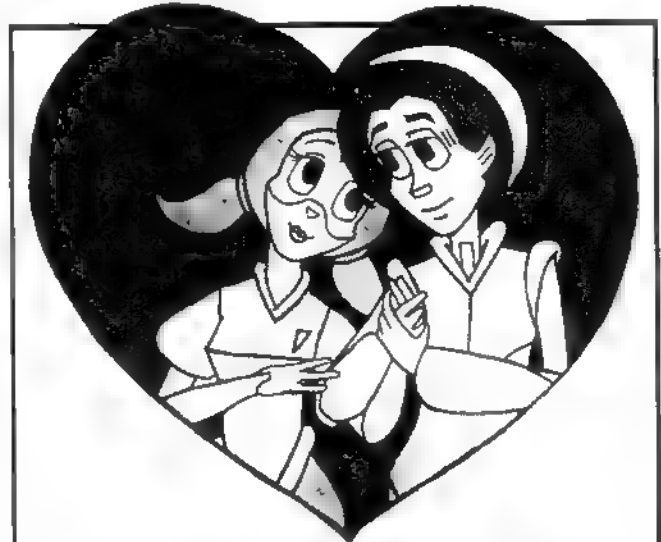
FIGHT WITHOUT HONOR # 8 (1976). Kinji Fukasaku is at it again! The penultimate entry in the popular series (and the last by Fukasaku) finds the ever-hip Bunta Sugawara returning to tear the screen apart (and look cool while doing it). While the lack of subtitles made following the complicated plot confusing, it really doesn't matter when you have bullet-riddled bodies, up-close knifings, and constant beatings every few minutes. Not to mention a white-knuckle car chase, gritty handheld camerawork, and a wonderfully over-the-top, cynical finale, as Bunta chases after his hit while pursued by hundreds of cops and yakuza. Another grimy classic from Fukasaku.



JOHN HARTZELL; Chicago, IL.
THE SENIOR SNATCH [a.k.a. Kahuna] (1982). A group of young women graduate from high school and celebrate by going surfing. They discuss a legend they've heard about the ghost of an old man who lives at the top of a nearby mountain. They've heard that this spectral pervert will grant a wish to any woman who has sex with him. An incongruous flashback shows how the horny old bastard was killed. A minister and his wife have just been married, but the trim-shy man of God refuses to sleep with her on their honeymoon. The randy broad seeks action elsewhere, and falls into the clutches of a handy cocksman who cleans her clock but good. The virginal minister catches the two in the act, pulls a gun, and shoots his own wife in the head. An angry mob blames our Casanova, and he is sentenced to death. He comes back from the dead as a hairy mountain-dwelling ghost, and the film returns to the present. We suffer through a lot of stock

surfing footage before the title Seniors start shagging the old dog. One by one, the surfing sluts ride grandpa's pole, while a geeky jerk watches them through binoculars. The old ghost appears invisible to anyone not boning him, so there are several binocular-outlined shots of naked girls writhing solo in the throes of supernatural ecstasy. After servicing the geriatric ghoul, the beach bunnies are given the chance to have one wish granted each. They all choose the same wish: to be better surfers! Voila! We are treated to more stock surfing footage as our moralistic tale comes to an end. This softcore classic is easily

one of the most inept films I've ever witnessed. It was shown on a double bill with the *GAS PUMP GIRLS* in the summer of 1982, and was actually selected as Dog of the Week by Siskel and Ebert when they were doing Sneak Previews on PBS. They claimed that the movie was so bad that cars in the make-out section of the drive-in actually started honking at the screen! The audience at the Marion, Illinois drive-in where I saw the film was not quite as particular. I have never seen this film available on video tape and have never seen any reference to it in any film magazine or book. Too bad, because if memory serves, this is quite an entertaining mess.



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ADAM GROVES; Manhattan Beach, CA.

ROMIE-O AND JULIE-8 (1979). For those in search of primo kid-vid weirdness, this animated trifle from Canada's Nelvana studios should satisfy. Star-crossed robots Romie-O and Julie-8 find themselves stranded on the Garbage World. Romie-O falls through a hole to the center of the planet and Julie-8 gets kidnapped by the forklift monster. Also featuring flying cigars, Romie's trip across the planet by running atop a rolling trash can, a tightrope walk across a chasm of falling debris, some pukably saccharine songs and a Message (I've forgotten what). At least it's only twenty-five minutes long. Nelvana was supposed to conquer Disney and corner the world's animation market. They didn't.

TRIBE (1988). A pretty extraordinary underground featurette, made by American filmmaker John Duncan in Japan (where the censorship laws are much looser). A band of anarchists attempt to spread worldwide chaos via a pirated TV signal that increases aggression. Unfortunately it seems the transmission does its job a little too well, infecting the transmitters themselves. Along the way we're treated to actual not footage, a botched autopsy, much rampant brutality and snippets of hard-core pornography digitally mutated into bizarre, Giger-esque psycho-scapes. Yes, it's a poor man's *VIDEODROME* to be sure, but also a uniquely disturbing, hallucinatory vision of societal breakdown, marred only by its cheap-assed shot-on-video look (ALWAYS a liability, in my opinion).

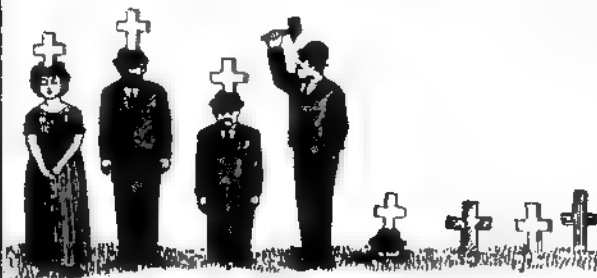
SWAN LAKE: THE ZONE (1990). Very much a product of the new Russian cinema that gave us Aleksandr Sokurov, although director/cinematographer Yuri Ilenko has been around since the sixties. This extremely low-key prison-escape drama was based on writings by the late, great Armenian filmmaker Sergei Paradjanov (his 1964 *SHADOWS OF FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS* was photographed by Ilenko), but the guiding influence here is clearly Tarkovsky—scenes of desperate people wandering through ravaged pastoral landscapes had me wondering if someone had spliced in bits of *STALKER* (read the second part of the title). With pacing that might charitably be called catatonic and a storyline that isn't exactly bursting with invention, this is a

demanding film, but a rewarding one nonetheless. A mid-film blood transfusion and the concluding suicide (the protagonist slashes his wrists as the sun rises in the background) qualify as some of the most overwrought, strangely poetic filmmaking I've ever seen.

SOPHIE'S PLACE (1990). This was called the greatest animated feature ever made -- by Stan Brakhage. Uh, oh! This flick certainly feels like an example of cinema according to Stan B. Silly, pretentious beyond words, thunderously boring. That's not to say that it doesn't have some pleasingly weird images here and there (I'm sure any SHOCK CINEMA reader can appreciate the sight of a helium balloon with two giant eyes floating through vaguely mythical landscapes), and creator Harry Smith definitely has a striking animation style, but you'd probably be better off with a compilation of Smith's short films, or possibly viewing this one in permanent fast forward.

THE DARK SIDE OF THE HEART (1992). It shouldn't come as any surprise that this loopy Argentinean masterwork hasn't seen much play time on these shores. I doubt too many American viewers, much less distributors, would know what to make of director Eliseo Subiela's one-of-a-kind mixture of sexual frankness and balls-out surrealism. We follow Olivo, a womanizing shitheel, on his quest for a woman who can (literally) fly. Those who don't fit the bill are ejected from his bed into a void. He gets reprimanded by his dead mother through a talking cow, crawls up a woman's vagina, and has long discussions with his alter-ego, whom he calls a "marcon." This is certainly light years from Subiela's last film *MAN FACING SOUTHEAST* (1985). It's

ARRABAL'S VIVA LA MUERTE

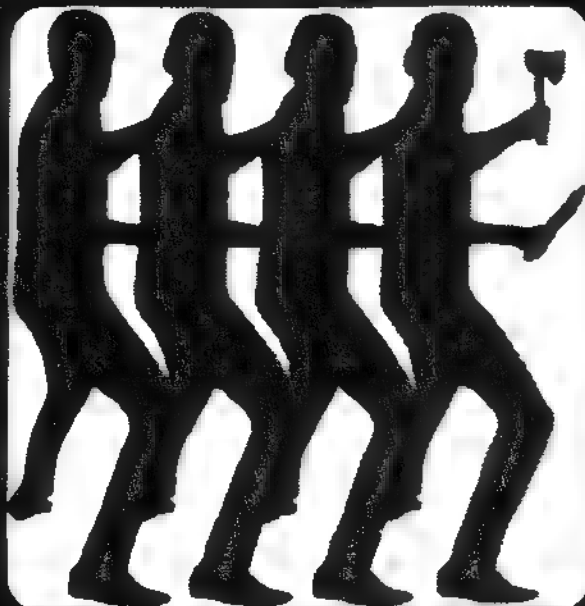


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grandmother labors under the misapprehension that he's a girl. Meanwhile, the narrative is constantly interrupted by Fando's grotesque and incestuous fantasies, his mother masturbating or standing atop a cage shitting on his father's head, a town flooded with piss, a priest forced to eat his own genitals, gouged eyeballs, a crucified frog inevitably, the "real" world begins to dissolve and the hallucinations take over. A brilliant, mind-roasting piece of filmmaking that hasn't aged a bit in the nearly thirty years since its inception, this is one flick that simply **MUST** be rediscovered. I'd LOVE to see this monster unleashed upon today's pussified, politically correct film world—but I know that just ain't gonna happen any time soon.



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HARDGORE - The ULTIMATE big budget blood splattered XXX horror roughie! Hospital death cult terrorize teenage Maria with Necrophilia,



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HOT SUMMER IN THE CITY - Lily white virgin abducted and defiled by black militants.

INTRUSION - Kim Pope. Sensitive housewife is raped in most hateful, debasing manner. \$24.95

JOY - Sharon Mitchell. Young teen causes rape outbreak in the streets of NYC.

KITTY'S PLEASURE PALACE - Rape victim takes revenge on society's sex offenders (rapist, necrophiliac, serial killer). Excellent!

LITTLE ORPHAN DUSTY - John Holmes, Rhonda Jo Petty. Lost deep in the dark woods, the bikers gang rape her repeatedly. Uncut version. \$24.95

LONG JEANNE SILVER - Our version contains the extreme and insertion scenes absent from all other copies. D: Alex DeRenzy. \$24.95

LOVE SLAVES - Beautiful women abducted, shot up with drugs and trained to kill. D: Bob Cressa.

THE MORNING AFTER - A blonde sex worker is found naked and dead with multiple stab wounds. Was it daddy?

NIGHT CALLER - Phone freak plays "mommy games" with sleazy hookers and rapes lonely women.



ORIENTAL BLUE - Jamie Gillis procures young runaways for Chinese slave-ring.

RED HEAT - Bloody female sex killer flick with memorable Las Vegas drive-by footage. D: Ray Dennis Steckler.

SEX WISH - Crazed killer with bag full of torture instruments cross dresses, sports speed and screams like a raving maniac.

SHARON - Zebedy Colt, Jean Jennings. Southern belle Sharon is prey to daddy's unbridled lust.

SOMETIME SWEET SUSAN - Inmates & orderlies torment schizoid female locked in insane asylum.

STORY OF JOHANNA - Jamie Gillis. Wealthy libertine shapes young femme into total sex slave. By Gerard



SUMMER IN HEAT - Desiree Cousteau defiled by backwoods scum. Take off on Deliverance.

SWEET SAVAGE - Busty blonde Carol Connors kidnapped and raped by Indians on the warpath.

THE TAKING OF CHRISTINA - Two drifters brutalize truck stop hookers and virginal bride.

TEENAGE XXX NITTEN - Renee Bond. Teen raped/



murdered by demented hermit who ends up budgeoned and castrated!

THAT LADY FROM RIO - Vanessa Del Rio runs NYC white slave racket. Plenty of sleazy kicks!

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS - High class female defiled by demons that bathe in mud and piss!

UNWILLING LOVERS - Disturbing Zebedy Colt masterpiece has adult with the mind of a 10yr. old kill and then rape dead female playmates.

WATERPOWER - Jamie Gillis is enema-crazed rapist/killer in Taxi. Driver take-off.

WINTER HEAT - Jamie Gillis. Helen Madigan, Broe Anthony. Drifters assault three females staying in winter cabin.

WOMEN'S TORMENT - '77. Tara Chung. Ax wielding female plunges headfirst into hallucinogenic mayhem.

D: Roberta Findlay.



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SHAOLIN EXTERMINATOR '82. Non Chung Chun. Widescreen.
SUCCUBARE '81. Snake Poison Magic with mondo mutilations.

EXPLOITATION

BONNIE'S KIDS '73. Tiffany Bolling. D:Arthur Marks.*



CLASS OF '74 Pat Woodell, Marka Bey. D:Arthur Marks.* Colorful 1970's bikinis!

FIVE ANGRY WOMEN '72. Women bust out of Southern prison.*
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STRANGE VENGEANCE OF ROSALIE '72 Bonnie Bedelia.
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SWINGING BARNMAIDS (aka Eager Beavers) '75. Dyanne Thorne, William Smith.*

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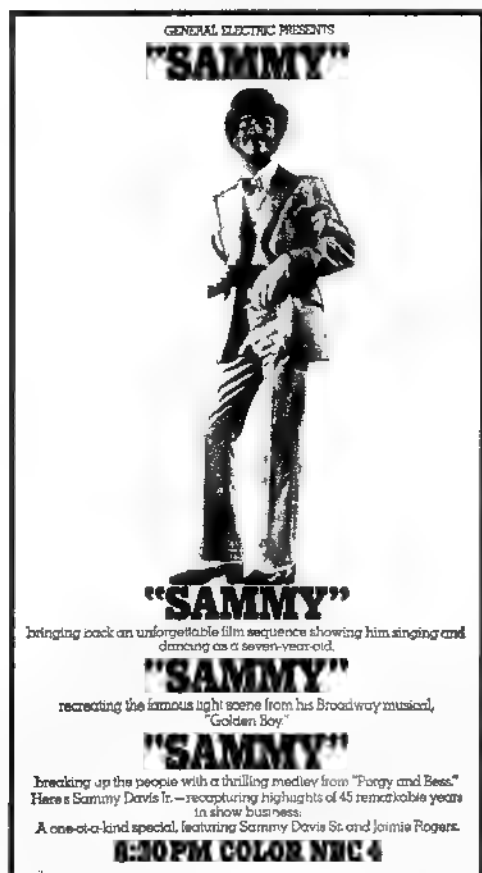
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SHARP RELIEF

TAVIS
by RIKER

For our autumn installment of Sharp Relief we present a cool assortment of Vegas greats, "difficult" jazz personalities and British rock recluses. We start by shamelessly seling out and jumping on the "Rat Pack" nostalgia train by unearthing a prime artifact from the Golden Age of Television. First telecast on 11/16/73, **SAMMY!** is just that, baby—one solid hour of the Candyman in his prime



It kicks off with Sammy Davis, Sr. introducing a clip of his son at age 7 belting out "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You" like a pint-size tap-dancing Satchmo. Cut to the '70s, and Sammy jumps right in with "This Dream" (an Anthony Newley showstopper) in all his tuxedo/cigarette/pinkie ring style. From there you get soundstage production numbers ("Mr. Bojangles"!) and segments filmed with an audience (in-the-round! With mirrored ceilings!), and NO GUESTS! That's right, it's back-to-front Candyman and that means plenty of "Peace and Love, and Togetherness" as Sammy looks back on his life and career (hear Sammy not regret losing an eye because "you can gain a lot of insight at the same time." Yow!). The production peaks as Sammy duets w/Sammy in a spit-screen "Porgy and Bess" medley and a groovy "Get It On" number with Sammy and dancers in serious SPACE 1999 style jumpsuits! Sam also hits the jackpot with ace versions of "For Once in My Life" and a look back at "Golden Boy," complete with the choreographed title fight! Throw in a couple of balads, Sammy grabbing a "little drinky-winky" between numbers, and you've got Mr. Entertainment full stop. Mazeltov!

Another compilation of classic (early '70s) TV has boogied into our VCR's here at Sharp Relief HQ, and from the opening credits of **BEST OF SOUL TRAIN** "you can bet your last money it's ALL gonna be a stone gas, honey." When **Don Cornelius** opened each show with that smoky invite and offered up the finest in R+B and funk performers the '70s had to offer (lots), American Bandstand became "Honky Honk" by comparison. The fine archives of "TV lost and found" have 15 (!) awesome volumes of primo funk and soul from the days of velvet. The question really becomes "Who isn't on these shows?" from classic performances by James Brown, Stevie Wonder and Smokey Robinson, to hardcore funkmeisters Lakeside, The Isley Brothers and The Gap Band, the afros are high, the colors are day-glo, and the flares are wide! And we're in for an ass-whipping if we forget the soul divas like Aretha Franklin and Diana Ross, and the streetwise mama mama Millie Jackson. Add the smooth soul of groups like The Stylistics, The O'Jays (yes, "Back Stabbers"), and The Delfonics and you can kick back, pour your bad self a Pink Champagne (with a cherry twist) and groove with an 'UltraSheen as Don Cornelius wishes you "Peace, Love and SOUL."

Last column we covered MINGUS (we be erroneous — it was filmed in 1966, but actually released in '68), a sad and powerful document of a jazz legend at his down and out-east. We're glad to follow up with a new release from the folks at Shanachie video, **TRIUMPH OF THE UNDERDOG**, a great new documentary on **Charles Mingus**. Combining vintage performance clips and rare interviews with new (and sometimes hilarious) testimonials from friends, ex-wives, and fellow musicians, director Don McGlynn constructs a complex portrait of a true jazz radical. From his early years as apprentice to Duke Ellington and Charlie Parker through his legendary partnership with sax giant Eric Dolphy, all of Mingus' musical phases are on display. But Mingus the character also gets equal play here (when asked by an interviewer what he's 'saying' to the other musicians during his improvisations, Mingus deadpans "I'm saying *Fuck You, You Motherfucker*"), from the hardships coming from a racially mixed background to his outspoken

political rants (he yells for the soundman to "turn the fucking mic on!" before he launches into a radical R-rated version of "Shortnin' Bread"). His troubled period is also on view when Eric Dolphy's tragic death spiraled Mingus into years of psychological problems and gonzo behavior (clips from MINGUS are featured, including the shotgun "test" in his apartment and his eviction by NY's finest). But his recovery and return to the concert stage in the '70s and the posthumous performance of his brilliant composition for jazz orchestra, "Epitaph" brings the film to a upbeat (if melancholy) close. Director McGlynn opts for a straightforward approach, not unlike similar profiles produced for the South Bank show in the UK, and

Bravo Jazz Profiles stateside, but the unique quality of the interviews with Mingus and company have a warm, casual feel, delivering an insider's view of a true American artist, and all the pain and joy of his life in (and out of) music.

All of us here at Sharp Relief (one guy in a room with A.V. equipment) have a real soft spot for those recording artists who, early on in their careers, are offered an invitation to an A-List party at the "Pop Star" hacienda who opt to stick around just long enough to get a taste of fame, then slip out the service entrance to make their music. Such musicians as Tom Waits, David Sylvian, and Scott Walker all took the buy-out from big time success, and have continued to make great records with a minimum of hype. A new addition to the list is British singer/songwriter **Mark Hollis**, whose first self-titled solo disc is in stores now. Formerly the lead singer of Brit Synth popsters Talk Talk, whose last two records "Spirit Of Eden" and "Laughing Stock" hinted at the stark soundscapes and haunting compositions now fully realized on his new album. Recorded live with a small ensemble using only two microphones, the level of intimacy is as high as the recording levels are low. Hollis' love of modern and avant-garde styles and composers like Morton Feldman is evident in the choice of such instruments as Cor Anglais, Bassoon and Harmonium in addition to the usual guitar/bass/drums. The end result is 8 songs of quiet intensity and power. Hollis has said that his recording method and choice of instruments was to give the album and its songs a "timeless" quality. Mission accomplished.

The "last minute inclusion" award this column comes to Sharp Relief via the internet trade posts, and it's a classic. Any serious Monty Python fan can trace some of the anarchic style back to the Bonzo Dog Band, the legendary English rock/comedy group. Bonzo alumni **Neil Innes** eventually became an auxiliary Python, providing the musical parodies and joining up for the mystery tour when Python performed live. But before Eric Idle and Innes changed everything with THE RUTLES, they hooked up for a short-lived (but much loved) series, **RUTLAND WEEK-END TELEVISION**. When several episodes of RWT

came our way, we fired up the VCR (amongst other things) for a priceless collection of Python-style sketches. Innes' hilarious musical rips on everything shag-adelic (his Elton/Marc Bolan parody is our new favorite, but his Dylan parody *rules*), and biting parodies of yawn-inducing BBC fodder. Idle assembled a great company of actor/writers, including the great David Battley, and filled out the cast with British TV regulars like Wanda Ventham (Col Lake from UFO!). As usual, it was way ahead of its time, giving later efforts like "SCTV" major inspiration.

Next Time: "The Kings of Saturday Morning" — John Lennon's favorites revealed! **SHARP RELIEF WILL RETURN**



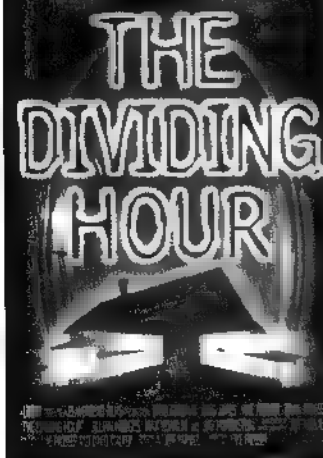
UNDERGROUND ODDITIES

ROT (1998).

[I ndead Entertainment, c/o Marcus Koch, 3440 Enterprise Rd. E., Safety Harbor FL 34695; \$20.00 ppd, with checks payable to Marcus Koch]

Blasting out of its starting gate with a bout of necrophilia during the opening credits, you know that good taste won't be an issue in this indie feature. Seeing Joel D. Wynkoop's name in the credits, you know subtlety and acting talent won't be on hand either. Nevertheless, this grisly romp has a gleefully obnoxious edge, extreme gore effects (like tearing your own face down to the bone), and a raucous soundtrack. Bully Scam stars as Muzzy, a heavily-mohawked punk, who fucks his girlfriend Sara (Tiffany Stunky) before she can inform him that she's a tad sick after earlier screwing a morgue cadaver. Unbeknownst to them, they've contracted a "transmutation virus" (aka The Rot) developed by a crazed ex-germ warfare expert (Wynkoop, in painfully comic mode), but the idea they're decomposing doesn't stop the pair from "destroying" a swanky home (tellingly, they never actually break anything, since this is obviously somebody's *real* residence) beating up their landlord, infecting a gothy "mall rat," and stealing a hippie's car. And who hasn't yearned to see someone puke in the middle of a torrid kiss? Director Marcus Koch brings the proper psychotic tendencies to the scenario and makes good use of seedy interiors, while the two leads are blissfully arrogant and abrasive. Sure, their faces look like shit as the disease ravages them, but they still look more appealing than some of the squatters who panhandle on Avenue A. Whenever the film sticks to Scam & Stunky, there's rarely a false (or social redeeming) moment. Yeah! The weakest link is Wynkoop, who's painfully amateurish and seem to be channeling the spirit of a retarded Dom DeLuise. While all of this nonsense overstays its welcome at 80 minutes, ROT is crude but heartfelt in its deviance, with several hilarious moments drenched in cheap glee.

WHEN THE HOUR STRIKES
THERE'S NO TURNING BACK



THE DIVIDING HOUR (1998).

[Playground Films Corp., P.O. Box 40626, Portland, OR 97240-0626]

Some indie features are a task to endure but in a refreshing change, these no-budget filmmakers get it right from the start. Four years in the making and with only a \$7000 budget, the result is this gntly, impressive effort. A quartet of scuzzy, low-rent bank robbers (a junkie, a bully, a stoned overgrown idiot, plus director Mike Prosser as their driver) pull off their latest gig and head for the Canadian border, and these guys seem so unprofessional that you *know* the shitstorm is only beginning. Stupidly wrecking the car, they snag a ride from a local good ol' boy, and end up at the country home of nearly comatose Lewis Gates and his cute daughter Dawn. Invoited to stay a spell, the problems begin slow (e.g. an old fridge which has appearing/disappearing food) and finally explodes in the final half-hour, with freaky hallucinations, sudden spats of violence

and psychosis, and some prime plot twists. It also gets points for going against the grain with a genuinely creepy, resonant finale, that puts most studio genre releases to shame. Prosser's direction is exceptional, with a well thought out shape and style, and is aided immeasurably by Jeff Yarnell's photography and a savvy script which avoids the usual clichés. Meanwhile, Greg James is a stand-out as the stoner with the bowl-cut hair (who eventually surprises you with his strength), while Brad Goodman is a more predictable, less potent, evil. Co-writer/co-producer David Walker is currently at the helm of the excellent '99 BADAZZ MOFO, while the pic's stop-motion animation is by Webster Colcord (who I first encountered with his '89 indie short, DOCTOR DEATH). A dark, vicious comedy of errors, fueled by well-developed, unpredictable characters, this indie HOUR delivers on all counts.

HOME (1998).

[Douglas Buck, 220 West 14th Street, Apt. 4C, New York, NY 10011]

The latest 25-minute film from Douglas Buck (who earlier knocked our teeth loose with CUTTING MOMENTS) is a portrait of a seemingly ordinary family man, who's would three turns too tight. First seen sitting in his workplace cubicle, Gary

remniscences about his domineering old man, who turned childhood into a grueling nightmare. Far from THE WONDER YEARS, pop was a bastard so cruel that he'd snap his own kid's flutophone, but instead of hating dear ol' dad, he, Gary takes it out on himself, by beating his own arm raw. And late one night, the boy plays voyeur on his parent's bedroom, witnessing his pop's masochistic mindgames. As an adult, he quietly tries to be the best family man possible, with a wife and daughter, but there's obviously something short circuiting under his facade of excessive Bible readings. Because, as we all know (and often fear), like father, like son. A profile of emotional wreckage glued together to resemble a family, this is well-shot, full of uneasy pauses, and highlighted by edgy performances from both Gary Betsworth as Gary and Christine Calo as long-abused wife Helen. The film's only weakness is the fact that the equally-chilly CUTTING MOMENTS plumbed such similar territory (but with excruciatingly graphic results), plus the fact that Betsworth stars in both of them as this emotionally fucked up father. While Buck's sophomore effort might not have the shock value of his first, he still delivers a potent vision of the past's ability to corrode the present, filtered through today's most dysfunctional sensibilities.

DR. BENDERFAX (1997).

[Tom Hosler, Sixth Avenue Pictures, 301 N. Greenwood Circle #10, Seattle, WA 98103; \$19.95 + \$2 shipping]

A mad scientist romp armed with a lovingly gruesome sense of humor, this refreshingly adept indie feature is as technically accomplished as any studio low-budgeter. At the illustrious Benderfax Institute, the title Doc takes care of several disturbed patients, and no surprise, there's also a secret lab in the sub-basement, where he conducts dangerous brain experiments on still kicking patients who're officially listed as dead. Running cranial probes into their skulls and muckling about with their brainpans. A new employee, Dr. March, gets suspicious when healthy patients turn up dead and missing, and the latest victim is an old woman who has a disabling stroke after being mugged, and is admitted as a Jane Doe. Following a standard narrative trajectory, there are several moments of bloody fun and a genuinely goofy concept at its core, with the best bits involving the crazy but childlike Farance (Nicholas Berry), a schizophrenic orderly with a crush on comely Nurse Carmen and a tendency toward bloody hallucinations (e.g. a decapitated body wandering about, a fridgeful of body parts). Then, add a disgruntled cop with an amusingly ridiculous grudge against Benderfax. Although never too extreme or imaginative, this reads its familiar territory with a firm hand. In the process, director-writer/cinematographer Tom Hosler delivers moments of Rami-escque humor (like a disembodied arm which crawls out of Farance's knapsack and attacks him). There are also ingratiating performances all around, with Steve Gouveia as the heroic doctor, Merodie Patterson as the victimized nurse, and Nigel Haze, dine appropriately snooty and shiny as this deranged Doc. While the 85-minute flick gets a bit slack in its script and pacing at times, that's nit-picking, because this is a solid piece of work, as well as the most amusing Medical Experimentation comedy in recent memory.

FACES OF GORE (1998).

[Threat Theatre, P.O. Box 7633, Olympia, WA 98507-7633; \$59.95]

Director/writer Todd Tjersland is at it again, this time promising (and delivering) 88 minutes of truly foul, documentary-death footage. Our host is the rather uninspiring Dr. Vincent Van Gore (Steve Sheppard), who wanders a cemetery and introduces various glimpses of real life viscera—all of it culled from Japanese-lensed, meticulously detailed carnage. It begins with crash footage, as rescue crews scrape concrete clean of torn flesh, peel one guy's crushed-in head from around fence post, and deal with a train derailment's charred-to-the-bone victims (including one pregnant woman and her crispy fetus). Its suicide section is a bit more low-key, since it only deals with electrocution, immolations and simple hangings. And finally, it tackles murders, but unfortunately, by now I was too numb to care. I've never been a fan of these FACES OF DEATH inspired, true-grue productions, but this one approaches its sleazy subject with a blatant, sick-assed sense of humor, often thanks to Tjersland's glib narration (during a Japanese student's self-induced hanging: "If only the students in America were this conscientious in maintaining their grade-point averages, we'd have an epidemic of mass suicides on our hands"). Of course, the main focus is capturing brains on the pavement, close-ups of ventilated skulls, and paramedics picking through remains. No question this makes R. Budd Dwyer's media suicide look tame. The only misstep is when Tjersland suddenly tosses in a last minute, indulgent plug for his recent fiction gore pic THE NECRO FILES. Unapologetic in its repellent intent, this revels in a no-holds-barred, close-up approach to death at its gooiest, captured with all of the enthusiasm (and subtlety) of a Monster Truck Rally.

THE BLUESMAN (1998).

[Christopher Michael, 2260 North Cahuenga Blvd., Suite 306, LA, CA 90068] Actor-director Chris Michael returns to the indie scene with this 22-minute junkie and sex tale, which is a change of pace from his earlier horror comedies (LIMP FANGS). Joe Romersa stars in the title role, as a blues musician who's down on his luck, scrapping for cash, and ever in search of a quick fix. Even when he gets his first (and only?) big break, the self-destructive allure of the needle doesn't stop. This is a dead serious subject, but the story isn't afraid to take some outrageous turns, such as when Bluesman hauls his "big funky ass" to pusher Sweet Willie Smalls (played by Michael, complete with buck teeth and a white afro). Or Jacklyn Lick as Heroin, a salty drug fantasy who lounges around Bluesman's apartment—and once she strips down to her b'day suit, it's no surprise he's willing to pawn his grandpa's guitar for a taste. Meanwhile, Romersa shows off his guitar licks during a gratuitous 2-1/2 minute audition. By the end, this twists into a sledgehammer anti-drug drama. Does that turn you off? Well, Jacklyn certainly won't when she's buck naked and writhing suggestively with an oversized hypodermic between her legs. To be honest, I'm usually pissed-off by this type of "just say no" anti-whatever agenda, but since this targets heroin, I can't really complain, since it's the only drug I've seen truly fuck up friends' lives. Besides, Michael knows how to provide that "spoonful of sugar," thanks to gobs of nudity, and even turns up as his longtime comic character of The Creeper (this time begging for loose change with an empty KFC bucket).

BARN OF THE BLOOD LLAMA (1997).

[Maybe Gravy Productions, 5400 Waterbrook Drive, Austin, TX 78723; \$10 + \$3 shipping, with checks made out to Kevin West]

As far as slapdash, comic/horror/trailer-trash tales go, this one certainly piles on the weirdness, but with little effect. It begins when a slew of half-baked characters find their way to a rural Texas shithole, er, *farm* called World O' Wool, run by a family of cretinous peckerheads who sell llama haggis and act like a cross between TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE and the cast of TITICUT FOLLIES. There's a deviant veterinarian (Kelley Swinney) who gives the llamas his personal attention (preferably, up the ass), a burnt-out rock star named Bock arrives for youth treatments plus a couple local sluts who flip burgers at the drive-in. Flying off in every possible direction, hoping something will stick, a central plot emerges with the appearance of a crazed blood llama, oozing with "toxic cud" and suffering from Male Berserk Syndrome (re: shots of actual llamas, intercut with some incredibly hokey fake-heads and hooves). There's also incest, a disembodied, but still-talkative head (a la THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE), and eventually, the gals use sharp tin can tops as makeshift throwing stars against these crazed creatures. Little of it makes much sense, but perhaps I'm naive to think that a movie with this title would. Instead, we get strident characters (particularly from Jug & Gibby, played by scripters Kevin West & Kirk Hunter), painful-to-the-retina photography, and amateur-nite violence (a severed head is obviously a mannequin's). Alas, while this offers strange characters and demented notions, I expected more laughs from these "freaked-out llamas."

ZOMBIE CULT MASSACRE (1997).

[L.D. Film Works, 4703 Willmer Court, Cincinnati, OH 45226-1815]

This indie horror feature definitely has a raw, homemade edge, but director Jeff Dunn knows how to keep it amusing, aided by solid camerawork and editing. In addition it goes gleefully overboard with gore, which will appeal to anyone attracted by the gruesome title. Meet Marvin (Michael Botouchis), a product of a fucked-up childhood (as seen in flashbacks), and his girlfriend Sally, who get more than they bargained for while visiting Marvin's drinkwater hometown. Attacked by wandering, flesh-eating zombies, the pair end up at a religious compound, ready for the upcoming apocalypse. Led by the horny Jeffrey (a repulsively spot-on Bob Elkins), he promises a "new kingdom," where only the faithful will be admitted. Pretty soon, it's difficult to tell which predator is scarier—to have your body chewed up by zombies, or your mind screwed up by zealots. Like Romero on a rotgut budget, this imagines a mini-society dealing with an undead threat, and fueled by imaginatively cut-rate hallucinations (thanks to the cult's lab experiments), Marvin meets the Devil and freaks out. It all builds to a crazed climax, as zombies attack, redneck bikers take part, and empowered Marvin goes totally mental. Along the way, we get a woman's bare tits graphically ripped off, a head crushed by Goodrich radials, plus a final half-hour of outstanding carnage. Alas, when it comes to basic storytelling, this is often a mess—so thank goodness for the flick's chaotic energy, sleazy trappings, and authentically shit-for-brains characters. Confusing simple bloodshed with a coherent conclusion this squeaks by on no-budget enthusiasm and imagination beyond its means.

KILLER SEX QUEENS FROM CYBERSPACE (1998).

[EH! Productions, 2421 North Center Street, Hickory, NC 28601]

It's difficult enough to take a title like this seriously, but on top of that, someone really should've spell-checked its video box. It's pathetic, yet oddly enough, fits perfectly with the movie it's promoting. Directed by Lou Vockell, this makes no apologies for its rampant nudity (in hopes that you'll be so busy whacking off that nobody notices its porn-movie acting and production values). A cyber-nerd shoves an ordinary disc into his hard drive, hoping for some CD-ROM stripping, but instead winds up DOA. The culprit is sleazy Prometheus Software, who've melded a "virtual warrior" with a standard sex program—emerging with a "virtual hooker" which eliminates its horny users. Meanwhile, at G Spot Video, store manager P.J. (the cantilevered Michelle Monroe) deals with her asshole boss and these potentially deadly CD's. But come on, the story is secondary to the film's goal of parading cyber-sex killer Lorissa McComas and her badly implanted "vixens" on-camera, while often pushing the software boundaries happily, none of these ladies are allowed to act. Complete with cameos by Jerry Springer and Larry Flynt, when the filmmakers aren't focusing on naked flesh or a shower scene (honestly, when was the last time you forgot to pull the shower curtain shut?), there are cringe-inducing attempts at humor, aimed at viewers who think Troma films are a tad too sophisticated. Admittedly, Vockell understands just how undiscerning his potential audience could be, and succeeds at aiming low (oh, around crotch level) and pandering to the lowest, possible level.

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BARE BREASTED COUNTESS 1973 Jess Franco, Lina Romay - XXX version in English - a countess sucks blood as well as other things - this widescreen print was compiled from 3 alternate prints making this the longest in existence. Contains a supplemental section with alternate versions of scenes.



PUSSY TALK The story of a girl and her talking vagina. She meets a guy with a talking penis. Her pussy starts having a conversation with his cock. Directed by Claude Mulot. Letterboxed in French.

NINE LIVES OF A WET PUSSYCAT 1977 Abel (Bad Lieutenant) Ferrara directs this XXX Blaxploitation film.



JUSTINE DE SADE Claude Pierson's adaptation starring Alice Arno. Wall-to-wall sleaze, sex and sadism. In French with English subtitles.

VIVA LA MUERTE 1971 A very strange film filled with surreal and symbolic sequences. Played against a backdrop of torture and death. A young boy who has incest fantasies finds people around him abducted and killed. In French.

VEIL OF BLOOD 1970 A lesbian vampire film directed by Joe Sarno. A couple seek refuge in a castle inhabited by nude females dabbling in the Black Arts and making everyone into a sex slave. Mint re-mastered French print.

ILSA HAREM KEEPER OF THE OIL SHEIKS 1978 - uncut version contains all the sex and violence cut from the other versions.

EROTIC NIGHTS OF THE LIVING DEAD 1979 Exclusive uncut XXX Joe D'Amato - subtitled by Video Vortex - gory, rotting flesh eating zombies, cannibalism, sex, Laura Gemser

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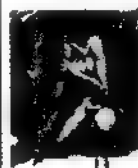
ANGEL ABOVE, DEVIL BELOW - XXX - A girl finds her pussy is possessed by Satan. It speaks in a demonic voice and makes her have sex.

THE CASE OF THE SMILING STIFFS Sean (Last House on the Left) Cunningham directs Last House star Fred Lincoln and Harry Reems. A female vampire is killing men by sucking their dicks. The men die with a permanent erection.



BLACK EMANUELLE 1975 Extremely rare XXX version. Laura Gemser's first Emanuelle role in her first onscreen adventure.

VIDEO VORTEX'S GYNECOLOGICAL HORRORS 1987 We have produced a tape featuring the grossest venereal disease images as well as the grossest, diseased sexual organs we can find. Includes both males and females. **WARNING** this tape will probably make you not want to have sex for about a week.



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NEW RELEASES

R.I.P.: REST IN PIECES: A PORTRAIT OF JOE COLEMAN (1997). Notorious for his disturbing paintings of serial killers and human grotesqueries, the life and art of Joe Coleman is celebrated in this expertly constructed love letter, er, documentary—armed squarely at the ready converted Coleman, now in his 40's, explains that his fixation is deeper than simple cheap thrills, and openly discusses the events which shaped his obsessions. Director Robert Pejo devotes plenty of time to Coleman's thought-provoking ramblings, and while his artwork's subject matter might seem outrageous, we're informed he's less interested in their external gruesomeness, than in the internal pain which causes it (this comes from a guy who considers a serial killer's actions a form of "communication"). Coleman also performs an autopsy, visits a strip club (most likely closed nowadays, thanks to Giuliani's Gestapo crackdown) and recalls his infamous stage performances, when he'd bite the heads off live mice and ignite explosives in his shirt. Sprinkled throughout are interviews with friends, most offering only lightweight observations. In addition to ex-wife Nancy Pivar, Jim Jarmusch and Coleman sit in a church, plus Joe visits the home of West Virginian rockabilly musician Hasil Adkins (who's heavily featured in the soundtrack). Strangely, only at the very end do we meet his brother and uncover his more ordinary roots. The film's lone tension comes from ex-girlfriend Dian Hanson, since she obviously still has issues with the guy. Plus, look quick for a clip of the late G.G. Allin running around naked (no, really?). Personally, I'd like to have heard a few dissenting viewpoints, instead of everyone praising his genius—which often makes this feel like an E! profile. While only 88 minutes long, the film is also padded with info used discussions and belabored insights. Gripes aside, Coleman's a terrific subject and this is, arguably, the most insightful portrait we're going to get (for now).

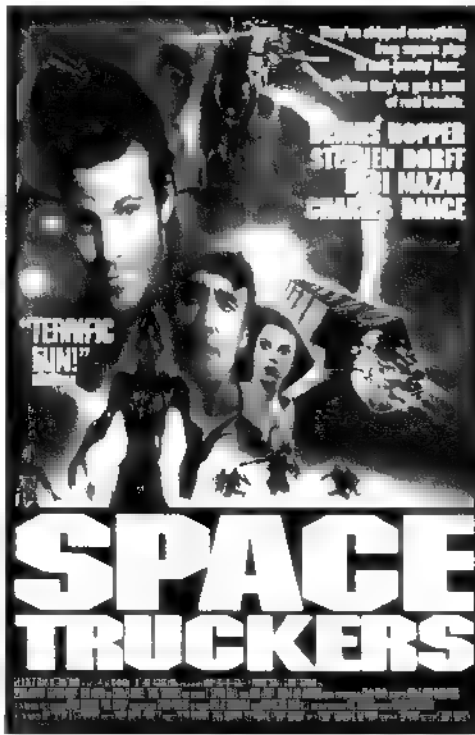
SPACE TRUCKERS (Video Junkie; 1996). How could I possibly resist a sci-fi flick which (1) stars Dennis Hopper in another SUPER MARIO BROS. super seal-out role, and (2) was directed by Mr. RE-ANIMATOR himself Stuart Gordon? What the hell was I in store for? CONVOY IN SPACE? SMOKEY AND THE SPACEBALLS? Never as comic as it hopes to be, Hopper plays 22nd century space trucker John Canyon—who's hauling Martian square-pigs (the best image in the entire movie) across the solar system. Debi Mazar co-stars as a space-waitress who Canyon has a boner for, Stephen Dorff (the '90s answer to Malcolm McDowell, with a similar career trajectory) is a trucker rookie, and joining forces, their next job is a rush assignment to the planet Earth—while unknowingly carting an army of robot-killing machines controlled by an egomaniacal shithhead. After Mazar and Dorff do an anti-grav lip-lock in their space-skivvies, the ship is hit by asteroids and spacejacked by prates (including Vernon Wells and horny, half-cyborg Charles Dance), with the bio-mechanical super-soldiers accidentally unleashed. Co-starring George Wendt as a company rep from InterPork (who's squeezed through a space porthole) and a brief appearance by Barbara Crampton, this half-baked affair boasts a smattering of clever ideas, yet more often slides happily into mediocrity. Sure, there are lots of spiffy special effects, but this is less a real movie than a long episode of QUARK. It's particularly sad to see Hopper in the type of role usually reserved for William Shatner, and while the guy has had his fair share of embarrassing moments, this one is the dumbest yet. SPACE TRUCKERS is either the most expensive Saturday morning show Sid & Marty Krofft never made, or the dumbest sci-fi idea since MOM AND DAD SAVE THE WORLD.

CRYING FREEMAN (Video Dungeon; 1995). Three years after being lensed, this live-action Brian Ytznar production, based on the Japanese anime and comic, is finally getting a video release. Not in the US, of course, so it's onward to an import source for the letterboxed, Japanese version. On the negative side, though most of it was shot in English, several long scenes are in Japanese, without translation. On the positive, the movie is pretty damned entertaining. Following stunts in martial arts sludge like ONLY THE STRONG, Mark Dacascos takes the title role as a super-assassin who, with a tear in his eye, basts the life out of his prey. When an attractive artist (Julie Condra) witnesses his latest handiwork and sees his face, she becomes his next target. Of course—who could've guessed that this heavily-tattooed hunk would fall for her (with the exception of anyone in the audience, that is)? Along with

flashbacks to this Crying Freeman's unwilling origin, leading to his current kill-on-command career, the plot gets convoluted when different villainous factions go after each other and allegiances get a bit tattered. Obviously influenced by HK Japanese action fare, this is a refreshingly no-nonsense work, with plenty of crisply choreographed, corpse-laden sequences jumpstarted by this seemingly invulnerable killer (I particularly enjoyed his "stabbing the burning bodyguards"). Dacascos has a fine, steely presence during the action scenes, while the script avoids any overly emotional moments (which, if you're familiar with Dacascos' limited acting skills, was a smart move). In support, there's the forgettable Rae Dawn Chong as a detective and Tcheky Karyo as an Interpol agent. Directed by Christopher Gens, this Vancouver-lensed pic delivers the goods, and it's a crime that while anime-based stop like FIST OF THE NORTH STAR can get a release, this vastly superior flick has remained shelved.

PERFECT BLUE (1998). First off, I'm definitely *not* a fan of most Japanese anime, since I find most of it puerile (in the dull sense of the word). To my surprise, this outstanding outing from director Satoshi Kon kept me fascinated, with its deft mix of cheap thrills, psychological dementia and Japanese pop culture craziness. Sick of being a music celebrity, young Mima quits her band in order to pursue an acting career, only to have her world crumble beneath her (think REPULSION starring Debbie Gibson). Unknowingly, her fame has given Mima some obsessive fans, with this career decision earning her a "traitor" fax from one of 'em. She also discovers an unauthorized homepage called "Mima's Place" on the Internet, containing uploaded details of her life which no one could possibly know.

No matter, because following her "no more cutesy pop star" agenda, things get even darker when she signs onto a small role in a crime-film, which has her character viciously gang-raped on a strip club stage. As she destroys her past image, Mima begins to question her grasp on reality, thanks to visits by a ghostly doppelganger that's still living her pop idol life and calls herself "The Real Mima." Meanwhile, her fake webpage begins reinventing her daily existence, so that it fits her past image. Before long, it's difficult to know what's real, what's the film-within-the-film, or what's the slow disintegration of Mima's mind. Oh, did I forget to mention that acquaintances are suddenly turning up dead? Full of character depth and complexity (instead of the usual sex and grue), this is a technical triumph, as it meshes giallo-style suspense with the usual anime veneer. Still, the film's biggest coup is how it transforms a vapid Japanese music princess into a full-blooded character we actually have sympathy for. Impossible? I wouldn't have believed it either.



UNCLE SAM (A-Pix; 1998). It's about time that William Lustig's red, white & blue horror flick was released. Unfortunately, it went direct to local video stores. I'm not that surprised, since anyone expecting a hard-edged sasher flick (a la MANIAC) will be pissed off by this subtext-laden mix of patriotism, black comedy and zombie bloodshed. It's an uneasy blend, but that's nothing new for scripster Larry Cohen. During Desert Storm, a US soldier named Sam Harper is killed by friendly fire. Meanwhile, back in his home town, young Jody feels pride for his deceased Uncle Sam—though unbeknownst to him, Sam was a sadistic son of a bitch. When Sam's body is returned home (the coffin placed in the living room?), we discover he's now one of the undead, who comes to life when teens burn an American flag over his grave. Then, in full military regalia, and later, a makeshift Uncle Sam suit, he begins slaughtering all of the disrespectful townsfolk. Some of this is pretty silly (like an Uncle Sam bedroom voyeur on stilts), but the body count takes a hike during the town's 4th of July parade. A cool supporting cast rounds out the tale, beginning with a brief, pre-credits turn by William Smith (who also provides a poem over the end credits, entitled "Desert Storm"). We've got Bo Hopkins as an Army Sergeant who delivers the corpse, Timothy Bottoms as Jody's liberal teacher, and ex-Riff Randi PJ Soles as the mother of a child crippled by fireworks. Stealing the show, Isaac Hayes plays a one-legged veteran, with a much less positive view of warfare. Later, Oscar nominee Robert Forster appears as a sleazy congressman, who winds up strapped to a fireworks tower. Following in the wake of Lustig's MANIAC COP, this could be dubbed MANIAC VET. Still, this is no grue-fest, but instead has a more sedate, ultimately-subversive agenda—questioning our values, even as characters are being impaled on an American flag.



to fresh corpses. This might sound like dicey fare, but it's more akin to *HEAVENLY CREATURES* than *NEKROMANTIKA*. Director Lynne Stopkewich walks a tightrope with this material, and despite taking a few missteps along the way, the film is anchored by the lead performance and a decidedly thoughtful view of Sandra's lifestyle. There are also several black comic moments, such as Sandra taking the company hearse out for a car wash, with an occupied coffin in the back. Molly Parker is exceptional in the type of quietly whacked-out role that's often difficult to pull off, unfortunately, after Stopkewich deftly establishes this character, little is done for its up-keep. The storyline is nonexistent, and turns predictable when her boyfriend

KISSED (1997). This insightful, Canadian-lensed character study had its theatrical debut in early 1997, didn't play in many cities, and still hasn't turned up on home video. That's probably because its main topic is necrophilia. Sandra (Molly Parker) has always been fascinated by the notion of death and during her Wonder Years, spends her summer performing late-night burials of every dead animal she finds, lovingly shrouding the teeny corpses. Then she strips down to her undies and does a ritualistic dance, while rubbing herself with the gauze-wrapped corpses. No surprise, as an adult, Sandra ends up working at a funeral parlor, learning the fine art of embalming and taking her first baby steps toward cadaver fucking. Obsessed with the dead, as well as the energy they give off, things mutate after meeting a male med student (Peter Outerbridge) who isn't freaked out when she calmly admits to making love

becomes hot on screwing a corpse—but lacks the spiritual backbone she brings to her abnormal actions. Giving us more facts about embalming than any average moviegoers would ever want, this is grim and challenging fare.

CREATURE REALM: FROM THE DEAD and DEMON'S WAKE (Brimstone Productions; 1998). These two anthologies follow the same route as executive producer Kevin J. Lindenmuth's earlier *ALIEN AGENDA* trilogy, but now tackles more horrific territory. *FROM THE DEAD*'s opening yarn, "Hollywood Mortuary," by Ron Ford, revolves around a once-famous Tinseltown make-up man (Randa Malone). Unexpectedly murdering ex-horror star Pratt Borokoff (a thinly veiled Karloff), he uses his mortuary job to raise the dead and revive interest in horror movies. It's an amusing premise, but Malone's performance quickly irritates, and at 55 minutes, needs a good trimming. That leaves less than a half hour for Lindenmuth's "Eyes of the Ripper." Sasha Graham stars as a woman haunted by dreams of an eternal conflict, and Joe Zaso plays a creepy pick-up who promises to help her out. Sasha is likable (how can you not enjoy a gal who carries a big ol' kitchen knife in her purse?), but with its mix of vague memories, violent fantasies and a dopey resolution, this steps into murky territory early on, and is never able to scrape its shoes clean. The more entertaining *DEMON'S WAKE* offers up two more tales, beginning with Tim Thomson's "Possession is Nine Tenths of the Law." The best of the lot, Paul Locklear stars as a public defender who's working two cases—a notorious mass murderer, and a woman who mutilated and ate her husband. Things get more intriguing when Locklear meets a tabloid reporter (David Rains) who's an expert in the occult, and offers to help expose the truth behind these ritualistic murders. Mixing good performances, interesting characters, and a few gruesome FX, Thomson finds just the right tone and maintains it throughout. After that is Michael Legge's brief "Dryer Struts," which has an elderly housewife dealing with strange occurrences in her basement clothes dryer, leading to a battle against an (intentionally laughable) 6-foot tall lint monster. While the filmmaking and FX are nothing special, this is buoyed by Phyllis Weaver's charming lead performance, and is an amusing caper.

ASSORTED PLUGS: First, a few words about Terry Giliam's adaptation of Hunter S. Thompson's **FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (Universal)**. One of the few summer releases I was legitimately excited about, it actually exceeded my expectations. No surprise, I'm an immense fan of the book, but there was no way I could've anticipated a movie so faithful to both its spirit and hilarious dialogue. As reporter/drug-fiend Raoul Duke, Johnny Depp might seem a tad extreme, but he nails Thompson, while Benicio Del Toro is equally outrageous (and fat as he is) as his impressively mind-fried attorney. Together, they dismember a pre-makeover Las Vegas, equipped with a convertible of drugs and deranged visuals aplenty, emerging with the most brainstem-wrenching, drug-fueled, major studio release in the last 25 years. It's my favorite film of '98, and the fact that it was panned by most US critics only confirms my suspicions that today's breed of media-parasites have their heads firmly lodged up their asses. An excellent new addition to the "Disgruntled and Psychotic Cinema" genre is Gaspar Noé's feature debut, **I STAND ALONE (Seul Contre Tous)**. Caught during its New York Film Festival gig, this is a dour profile of an unemployed butcher, as his world goes to shit. Needing someone to blame (or, more important, to cling to), his non-stop, hate-fueled inner monologue finally takes physical form when he snags a gun. While there are vicious moments galore (including a fetus pounding and a little brain-spattering), we mostly have this angry fiftynothing (imagine Archie Bunker crossed with Travis Bickle) suddenly losing grip. There's no sympathy on hand as his bleak existence suddenly takes a violent, ultimately redemptive (?) shift. Pocked with playful segues and didactical tricks (which rips you from the reality of the piece), this lacks the driven focus of a *TAXI DRIVER*, but is also unexpectedly powerful and subversive, with a commanding performance from Philippe Nahon. Without question, Anchor Bay is one of my favorite video distributors, thanks to their eclectic mix of cult classics, including letterboxed releases of Fulci's **ZOMBIE**, Larry Cohen's **Q**, and an uncut **STRAW DOGS**. Their Hammer pics are the best of all, since many have never turned up on US home video. With **THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES**, the tape not only includes the widescreen 89-minute Brit

ish print, but also its entire 75-minute US hack-job, **THE SEVEN BROTHERS MEET DRACULA!** That brings us to 1974's **SHATTER [a.k.a. Cal Him Mr. Shatter]**, a change-of-pace Hammer co-production with the Shaw Brothers. Stuart Whitman stars in the title role of a pissed-off American assassin in Hong Kong who, after being ripped-off by Anton Diffring's opium syndicate, is ordered to leave town by the British authorities. A 2-scene cameo by Peter Cushing. There's good location footage, some Shatter romance with an Asian gal half his age, and (best of all) amazing kung fu mayhem courtesy of martial arts instructor Ti Lung (*AVENGING EAGLE*). He saves the day, as well as the movie. Michael Carreras took over the directing chores from Monte Hellman, and the result is B-grade nonsense best watched during a drunken triple-bill. I also caught a screening of **FREE ENTERPRISE**, an indie comedy from director Robert Meyer Burnett. Imagine *CLERKS* meets a *STAR TREK* convention—without the humor and no-budget invention of the former, yet with all of the dateless geekiness of the latter. Essentially, it's the story of two all-too-believable nerds, and their search for success and sex, in an era when women prefer responsibility over '60s Action Figures. Coming to the aid is William Shatner (as himself), who becomes their life-lesson mentor. Outshining everyone else in the movie (a scary thought), self-deprecating Shat is first glimpsed reading a porn magazine, tries to drunkenly pick up women, and confesses that his dream project is a musical version of Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar." Unfortunately, his windbag presence isn't enough to save this navel-gazing feature, which revels in fanboy obsessions, is pried deep with Trekkie references, and (since they end with hot babes, who love them for who they are) feels like a wetdream written by guys who are still waiting to get laid. Christopher Lee slips into more than his Dracula cape in the 1976 French comedy **DRACULA, FATHER AND SON (Waterbearer)**. Directed by a pre-*LA CAGE AUX FOLLES* Eduoard Molinaro, it begins in 1784 Transylvania, with the infamous Count (a grayning-haired Lee) taking a lover and siring a son. In the 20th century, Dracula and his wimpy adult offspring (Bernard Menez) are run out of their home by Commie peasants and wind up in London. In the process, the film lets the ever-commanding Lee

hang up his long-in-the-tooth role on an amusing note as he puts the bite on an inflatable sex doll, becomes an actor by playing a movie vampire, and falls for a toothpaste company rep. Scripted by Jean-Marie Poiré (*LES VISITEURS*), the film is a little slow at times, yet sprinkled with amusing touches. Originally released in the US as **DRACULA AND SON** in 1979, it was horribly re-edited and saddled with joke English-dubbing. This version is true to its original intent, with a mix of droll humor and horror, in the tradition of *THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS*. On the subject of vampires, I first reviewed the no-budget **NEW YORK VAMPIRE (E.I.)** back in 1991, under its original title, **UNDYNG LOVE**. I didn't like it then, and seven years later, as it makes its first appearance on home video, my opinion hasn't wavered. A Big Apple Bloodsucker movie featuring a female vamp, this was lensed long before the idea became fashionable, but that doesn't change the fact that it's the pits. Tommy Sweeney stars as our hero who meets Julie Lynch as Camilla, an extremely unlikely model, who's also a vampire chick. One blowjob later, Sweeney looks mighty pale and is soon chowing down raw hamburger. Directed by Greg Lamberson (*SLIME CITY*) and crammed with wooden performances, don't expect to see the skimpy costumes featured on the video's cover, since they (and the actress) aren't in the movie. **BRAM STOKER'S SHADOWBUILDER (Sterling)** takes an obscure short story and adapts it into a modern-day supernatural yarn, graced with state-of-the-art effects and one terrific performance. Michael Rooker (who always brings a simmering dysfunction to his work) takes the lead as Jacob Vassey, an armed-and-pissed-off priest out to destroy a demonic cloud monster. As Vassey trails it to a small town and is joined by Tony Todd as a one-eyed hermit, this shadowy creature takes on humanoid form, infects the residents with its evil, and hopes to open a dimensional passage way with the help of an annoying rugrat and an eclipse. The supporting cast is bland, so thank goodness for Rooker, who transcends his material and brings the most energy to the film. The only other noteworthy moments involve the special effects. Frankly, most CGI sucks, particularly in low-budget efforts, but first-time director Jamie Dixon keeps it simple and surprisingly effective, making for a passable time-killer.

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Books AND Zines

LITTLE JOE SUPERSTAR. THE FILMS OF JOE DALLESSANDRO by Michael Ferguson (Companion Press; \$18.95).

Barring a surface resemblance to one of those Citadel "The Films of..." volumes, this informative profile focuses on a star that *deserves* to have a book devoted to them. Written by a longtime-Dallesandro junkie, this is the first thorough history of his career, and it begins with a brief intro by "Little Joe" himself, followed by an overview of his life—from his youthful days of juvenile facilities and nude modeling for gay mags, to his discovery by Andy Warhol and his subsequent cinema career. The remainder of this 214-page book delves deep into his eccentric on-screen work, with each film receiving individual attention, whether it's an underground classic or some unreleased-in-the-US shovel of EuroTrash. This section offers up the biggest surprises (as well as anecdotes aplenty, many provided by Dallesandro). Because while most cinemans are familiar with his Warhol ennui-a-thons, few remember that Joe also worked with some of Europe's most important directors, including

Walerian Borowczyk, Jacques Rivette and Louis Malle. Along with interchangeable Italian crime-pics, Ferguson offers up analysis on such ultra-rare efforts as FANGO POLLENTE (a.k.a. BOILING MUD) and JE T'AIME MOI NON PLUS, as well as several movies which Dallesandro barely recalls. Never skimping on the photos, this is sprinkled with over 100 of 'em (including plenty of nude modeling pix from his Athletic Model Guild days). More than just a promotional venue for the guy, Ferguson has a solid appreciation of Joe's career, while his savvy writing allows readers to understand his enthusiasm. This offers a glimpse inside Dallesandro's fascinating life and, most important, succeeds in separating the *man* from his big-screen *image* (which many have wrongfully assumed were synonymous).

MEAT IS MURDER! AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO CANNIBAL CULTURE by Mikita Brottman (Creation; £14.95 / \$19.95)

Motion picture cannibalism is rarely taken seriously, since it's more often used for simple shock value. This thoughtful (but often dull) book plumbs the deeper, anthropological aspects of this human-eat-human theme, and begins on a 'happy' note, with fact-filled profiles of over a dozen "cannibal criminals," including Albert Fish, Ed Gein, Andrei Chikatilo, and (of course) Jeffrey Dahmer. After over 70 pages of history, myth and fairy tale, the tone lightens, with "The Cannibal Camera" covering the various ways in which world cinema has embraced this dietary supplement. Brottman analyzes everything from the Brazilian MACUNAIMA to DELICATESSEN, while taking an insightful look at exploitation flicks such as SURVIVE! and DEATH LINE. Portions are also devoted to cannibal families (PARENTS, THE HILLS HAVE EYES), and harder-edged fare such as CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST and BLOOD FEAST. Sounds good? Not so fast. Because what makes this most noteworthy is Brottman's ability to take the sleaziest, most anti-social material and totally suck the fun out of it (e.g. "THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE is compelled to repeat a fixation on a non regenerative apocalypse"). There's no question that Brottman has done her homework on the topic, but the end result reads like a long-winded Cinema Studies grad thesis and desperately needs a more accessible tone.

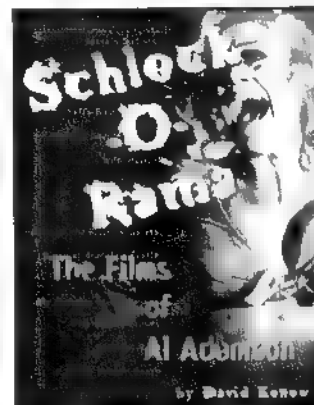


IT CAME FROM HUNGER! TALES OF A CINEMA SCHLOCKMEISTER by Larry Buchanan (McFarland & Company).

It's about time that someone devoted a book to the amazing (yet always hilariously penny-ante) career of director Larry Buchanan. Happily, he was able to write it himself, so we get this tale straight from the source. Beginning as a contract player at 20th Century Fox in the '40s, Buchanan soon moved to the world of Texas-ensued, drive-in cinema (most of them made, as the title implies, purely for the money). Admitting that he recognized, early on, the intrinsic entertainment of "good-bad" movies, he then proceeded to make a career of them—from 1952's APACHE GOLD with Jack Klugman, to a DeSade knock-off of VENUS IN FURS which was literally dumped into Lake Dallas, after the film's sexy star jilted the producer, to unforgettable monster-movie remakes like ZONTAR, THE THING FROM VENUS. Buchanan also enjoys namedropping, whether it's gossip on ex-LASSIE adolescent Tommy Kirk ("he was a disciplined actor, he was into drugs, and he was a homosexual"), boasts of wanting to hire a young Jack Nicholson for the lead in A BULLET FOR PRETTY BOY (a part eventually played by the equally-talented Fabian), and encounters with documentary pioneer Robert Flaherty, Oswald-ventilator Jack Ruby, and a far-from-famous Stanley Kubrick during a rough-cut of FEAR AND DESIRE. Considering how dim-witted his films can get, Buchanan writes with intelligence and style, and is willing to cop to his less-than-successful efforts. Of course, like many first-hand recollections, this often skimps on important areas the author doesn't find particularly arresting, in favor of more unfocused tidbits. The best of these is an embarrassing letter to Martin Scorsese, vilifying him for his LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST (this from a man who feels ex-HEE HAW-honey Misty Rowe was "electrifying" in his Marilyn Monroe flick). Including a full filmography and a "Guerrilla Filmmaker's Glossary," this is an amusing profile of maverick filmmaking moxie (in lieu of actual talent).

SCHLOCK-O-RAMA: THE FILMS OF AL ADAMSON by David Konow (Lone Eagle; \$19.95).

It's official, folks. Every filmmaker on the planet is going to have a book devoted to them someday, because if the late Al Adamson can make the grade, there's no telling when volumes on BLOOD FREAK's Brad Grinter and MYRA BRECKINRIDGE's Michael Sarne will be lining Barnes & Noble shelves. Sure, Adamson wasn't a groundbreaker. He wasn't a forgotten genius. In fact, considering some of his piecemeal projects, I'm surprised that they successfully ran through the projector. Still, he was more than just a survivor in the world of drive-in drack—he was a superstar. Author (and long-time Adamson-o-holic) Konow certainly agrees, since this childhood fan was only urged deeper into Adamson's legacy when he noticed that Maitin gave most of Al's movies a "BOMB" rating. Following his film career, this takes us from Adamson's struggling early days, to his first success (with Sam Sherman) with SATAN'S SADISTS, to Independent-International sludge like DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN. Always willing to hire over-the-hill stardom, and do anything to get his films seen (even if it meant retitling the same damned movie every summer), this ends with the info behind Adamson's murder and Jacuzzi-in-concrete burial. Lightweight, but loaded with fun facts, its 160-pages are padded out with photos and informative sidebars. Konow often goes a little heavy on the praise (e.g. John Carradine's "stellar performance" in BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR), and gives little space to Al's later efforts (his final film, SUNSET COVE earns only one paragraph). Sprinkled with lengthy film synopses and recollections from Adamson-accomplices Greydon Clark, John "Bud" Cardos, Gary Graver, and many more, SCHLOCK-O-RAMA offers proof of just how far 'creative necessity' can go in the movie biz.



VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

AES-NIHL PRODUCTIONS, 7210 Jordan Ave. No. B-41, Canoga Park, CA 91303. A great selection of video oddities, including serial killers, Satanism, arthouse dementia, plus their own productions (*The Goddess Bunny*, *Manson Family Movies*).

ALPHA BLUE ARCHIVES, Dept. Shock, P.O. Box 16072, Oakland, CA 94610. An amazing array of vintage sleaze, from softcore oddities to harder-edged gems starring the genre's raunchiest names.

BLACKEST HEART MEDIA, c/o Shawn Smith, P.O. Box 3376, Antioch, CA 94531-3376. Featuring some of the weirdest, nastiest films and products on the planet, as well as exclusive vid-dementia that you'll have to see to believe. Only \$3 for their catalog.

BOOTLEG LIFE, P.O. Box 138545, Chicago, IL 60613. These video degenerates offer up some of the raunchiest, grimmest XXX-'n'-fetish pics from around the globe. \$3 (plus age statement) for their "Scatalog."

CREATURE FEATURE VIDEO, P.O. Box 602, Dept. SC, Northford, CT 06472. A collection of all the hottest genres, including EuroTrash, uncut horror, giant monsters, and ultra-obscure blaxploitation. Send a postcard for their complete catalog.

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA, P.O. Box 12161, Spring, TX 77391-2161. Craig Ledbetter has unearthed some of the most outrageous Euro Trash imaginable, and his catalog (\$3) is filled with bizarre films even I'd never heard of. Packed with exclusive oddities, he gets my highest recommendation!

JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT, Dept. SC, P.O. Box 19, Butler, NJ 07405. J4HI features the best from the grindhouse past, the old *Gore Gazette* video collection, and lots more! \$3 gets you their catalog (checks made out to Mike Decker). Recommended!

LUMINOUS FILM & VIDEO WURKS, P.O. Box 1047, Dept. SC, Medford, NY 11763. One of my faves, offering everything from ultra-obscure European sex pics to unreleased-in-the-US arthouse fare. Excellent quality, and full color packaging.

MIDNIGHT VIDEO, 5010 Church Dr., Copley, PA 18037-2626. Offering up some of the finest rarities from around the globe, including faves like Rollin, Franco and Fulci. Their slick catalog is \$4.

SHOCKING VIDEOS, c/o Mark Johnston, HC-77 Box 111, Hinton, WV 25951. A jaw-dropping selection of video rarities, from grindhouse classics to mind-roasting oddities which have never made it to legit video (including several titles I've never seen anywhere else). Amazing stuff!

SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO, P.O. Box 33664, Seattle, WA 98133. If you're in search of grindhouse-era sexploitation (and beyond), this is the mother load. Unearthing previously lost gems, Mike Vraney is the Kevin Brownlow of 42nd Street cinema.

TAPES OF TERROR, c/o P. Riggs, 11430 Mullins Drive, Dept. SC, Houston, TX 77035-2632. Hitting all the exploitation genres, their huge inventory ranges from horror 'n' sleaze rarities to the tops in

Cult Cinema. \$1 gets you their updated catalog.

VIDEO DUNGEON, P.O. Box 873, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688. Their catalog (\$3) offers up an array of obscure horror 'n' weirdness from around the globe, plus plenty of ultra-sleazy sexploitation. (Make checks payable to M. Wilson.)

VIDEO HOLOCAUST, P.O. Box 3187, Waterbury, CT 06705. \$2 gets you their complete catalog, crammed with classic sleaze and Eurotrash galore.

VIDEO JUNKIE, P.O. Box 1794, Aurora, IL 60507. Overflowing with uncut, cutting-edge releases, plus flicks from genre geniuses such as Argento, Fulci, Naschy, and more! Their catalog is \$3.

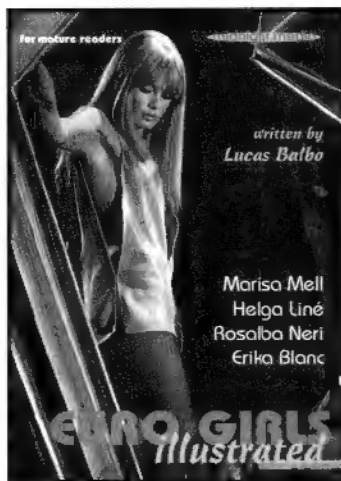
VIDEO SEARCH OF MIAMI, P.O. Box 16-1917, Miami, FL 33116-1917. E-mail: VSoM@aol.com. An amazing mix of overseas delights, from ultra-rare giallos and spaghetti westerns, to personally-subtitled Asian dementia and long-forgotten arthouse rarities. Write for their free, mind-blowing catalog.

VIDEO VORTEX, 429 Danforth Ave. Suite 414, Dept. SC, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4K 1P1. Offering up the most bizarre, uncut films from around the globe; and five dollars gets you their ultra-thick catalog (postal money orders or cash only).

VIDEO WASTELAND, 214 Fair Street, Berea, OH 44017-1554. In addition to their incredible mail-order rental service (with 1000's of titles), VW sells a wide array of rare books, mags and soundtracks.

EUROGIRLS ILLUSTRATED by Lucas Balbo (Midnight Media, P.O. Box 211, Huntingdon, PE18 8WD, England; £10.95 / \$22 ppd).

The latest release from editor Paul J. Brown is a gorgeous, 52-page volume devoted to a quartet of actresses who represent the tops in '60s/'70s EuroTrash allure. But instead of the usual sexy subjects (Steele, Lahaie, etc.) who have been chronicled to death, Balbo picks the more obscure (but no less worthy) Erika Blanc, Rosalba Neri, Helga Liné, and Marisa Mell. Aimed at "mature readers" (in other words, there are nudie pix!), we're given a brief career essay on each starlet, followed by a thoroughly-researched filmography. Printed on heavy stock, with loads of photographs and video box reprints, this informative work is well worth it for fans of these enticing ladies. And while less obsessed readers might find the text a bit dry (since most of it's a listing of film credits), they'll have no problem remaining satisfied by the pictures alone...Another recent Midnight Media release is **SAVINI: THE WIZARD OF GORE** by Paul J. Brown & Nigel J. Burrell (£11.95 / \$24). The end-all for fans of Tom Savini's incredible career, this 76-pager is one intensive interview with the guy, as he gives us the low-down on every film he's ever had a hand in—from classic horror gems to cheapjack slop that Savini would prefer to forget. There's also an intro by William Lustig, sidebar reviews of these movies, and plenty of gruesome photos of his most infamous work. An exhaustive, essential volume!



SEX, STUPIDITY AND GREED: INSIDE THE AMERICAN MOVIE INDUSTRY by Ian Grey (Juno Books; \$15.95).

This odd assortment of essays is all over the place in terms of subject matter, but ultimately strives to expose the inherent idiocy of the current American film

industry. In the process, author Ian Grey aims at several easy targets (WATERWORLD, the MPAA), as well as such reported-to-death topics as the fucked-up production history of the 1996 remake of THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU, the "devolution" of the BATMAN franchise, or the legend of Alan Smithee. None of this is big news to anyone with even a vague knowledge of cult cinema. At least his interviews are amusing, as he shoots the shit with folks as diverse as sexploitation amazon Julie Strain, *Leg Show* magazine publisher Dian Hanson, plus directors John Waters, Wes Craven, Ulli Lommel, and Michael Lehmann. There's also a (rare) positive take on the much-besmirched Sean Young. In the end, the book is less interesting for Grey's choice of topics than for the way they're presented, such as when he pisses off Samantha Eggar by telling her how much he liked her in THE BROOD, a visit to the chaotic world of James Toback, and a diatribe against the latest electronic editing systems, like AVID (which make hyper-incoherent flicks such as ARMAGEDDON possible). Tackling the waste and mismanagement of big-budget efforts, as well as the fakeness of today's current "indie" scene, Grey writes with a casual, yet acidic voice, aimed straight at a business which continually dumbs down its product for the slowest common ticket-buyer. A rambling mess of a book, yet not without its entertaining barbs.

DELIRIUM GUIDE TO ITALIAN EXPLOITATION CINEMA 1975-1979 Edited by Adrian Luther-Smith (Media Publications, 2 Leswin Place, London N16 7NJ United Kingdom; £10.95).

The title of this 96-page volume says it all. Between its covers rests a comprehensive listing of Italian schlock cinema at its most lurid—from the big names like Fulci and Argento, to lesser slop like the Tony Curtis' sex-"comedy" CASANOVA & COMPANY and tons of titles which have never been seen on this side of the Atlantic. Tackling one year at a time, in A-to-Z fashion, this covers everything from horror to sex comedies, complete with cast and crew information. At the very least, there's a brief synopsis of the plot—and in many cases, a longer review courtesy of Delirium's array of knowledgeable contributors. First and foremost, this is a terrific reference guide (where else are you going to have easy access to technical info on D'Amato's PLEASURE SHOP ON 7th AVENUE, or Deodato's WAVES OF LUST?). Complemented with photos and video cover reprints, and printed on slick stock, this guide overflows with invaluable information aimed at EuroTrash addicts.

MAGS, ZINES & SMALL-PRESS PUBLICATIONS

As usual, here's the latest batch of 'zines to hit my mailbox. Putting out your own publication certainly isn't easy, so try to give 'em all the support you can.

ASIAN CULT CINEMA #20-21 (P.O. Box 16-1919, Miami, FL 33116; \$6, or 6 issues for \$30). This slick, digest-sized glimpse into the Asian film scene is required reading, thanks to its intriguing topics and a solid array of contributors (of course, several of 'em are also featured in SC's Film Flotsam column). Packed with info, reviews, photos, and opinions, #20 contains a career profile of David Lam and an insightful interview with Kei Fukuiwara (*Organ*); while #21 features a lengthy interview with the incredible Seijun Suzuki (*Tokyo Drifter*)! Wow!

BADAZZ MOFO V.2 No.3 (P.O. Box 40649, Portland, OR 97240-0649; \$5 ppd, or \$12 for a 3-issue sub. Make all checks out to David Walker). I've been writing about black action flicks since the mid-'80s, and Walker's mag is, without question, one of my newest faves. #3 is the best yet, featuring interviews with Fred Williamson and Jim Brown, and a continuing guide to blaxploitation cinema (based on an Afro Rating Scale) which also has the good sense to give underappreciated gems like *Blue Collar* and *Bone* its highest rating. Plus, how can you resist a mag which has a history of Jesus Christ movies entitled "Jesus: Holy Asskicker"?

BLACK CAT 13! #2-3 (Tim Burton, 5045 Piccadilly Drive, Madison, WI 53714; \$2 for an issue, or \$13 for a year). The sophomore issue of this 32-page mag is devoted to vampires, both on-film and off (just to let you know their standards. *The Lost Boys* is considered "one of the best vampire movies of the 80's"). #3 features a slew of horror-related reviews and a brief history of Halloween.

CARBON 14 #13 (P.O. Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125; \$18 for 4 issues). The latest edition of this alternative music mag is filled with interviews (Thorazine, Sonny Tufts), articles, and tons of reviews; while Dan Taylor's always-delightful Exploitation Retrospect insert features an interview with *Chainsaw*-vet Marilyn Burns and reviews of mind-roasting fare like *The Garbage Pail Kids Movie*.

DREADFUL PLEASURES #13 (650 Prospect Avenue, Fairview, NJ 07022; \$16 for 4-issues). For this issue, Mike Accomando dredges up several reviews from long out-of-print issues, mixes in plenty of new fodder, and continues to revel in the movies which helped turn 42nd Street into (a now-sanitized) cesspool of cinematic cheap thrills. As always, packed with an array of kick-ass, original ad slicks.

EYE #15-17 (301 S. Elm Street, Suite 405, Greensboro, NC 27401-2636; \$14 for 6-issues). A slick, always entertaining mag devoted to fringe culture and out-of-control media. Recent articles have included a profile of Brazilian super-blond Xuxa and an interview with *Penitentiary*-auteur Jamaa Fanaka. More subversive articles tackle auto-erotic asphyxiation, and the Masons. Check it out.

FATAL VISIONS #21 (P.O. Box 1184, Thornbury, VIC 3071, Australia; \$6 U.S. Cash only). It's been awhile, but Michael Helms returns with another issue of his always-enjoyable mag. A long-time

favorite, full of info, humor and loads of reviews, this edition features interviews with Jon Hewitt and Richard Wolstencroft (*Bloodlust*), Sam Irvin (*Oblivion*), and *Bloodsucking Freaks* Joel Reed. Recommended.

FILMFAX #66-68 (Filmfax Subscriptions, P.O. Box 1900, Evanston, IL 60204; \$35 for a 6-issue sub). Simply put, this is one of the best magazines covering the wide-ranging subject of B-movies and early cult cinema. Each bi-monthly issue is nearly 150 pages thick, and crammed with reviews, retrospects and interviews. Recent interviews include the diverse likes of David Hedison, German Nobles, Val Guest, and John "Bud" Cardos. Meanwhile, their companion publication, **OUTRE** (same address; \$20 for a 4-issue sub), tackles "UltraMedia" in every form. The latest features Russian sci-fi flicks and Steve Allen.

FUZ #1 (Seth Wimpfheimer, 519 Birch Avenue, Westfield, NJ 07090; \$5 + \$3 postage). This outstanding new mag tackles two terrific subjects. First, an extensive history of Dave Allan (and the Arrows), including pics, album covers and a discography. That's followed by a profile of screen-siren Mimsy Farmer (*More, Devil's Angels*). Loaded with rare info, and printed on a heavy gloss stock.

GUILTY PLEASURES #3 (Threat Theatre, P.O. Box 7633, Olympia, WA 98507-7633; \$6 ppd). The latest edition of Todd Tjersland's "magazine of forbidden films and erotic horror" includes interviews with Argento and Romero, a self-promoting article on his (admittedly entertaining) *The Necro Files*, and various rabidly-critical reviews, which are amusing to read, even though I disagree with many of 'em.

HEADPRESS 16 (40 Rossall Avenue, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1JD, Great Britain; \$10 Cash). The newest edition of David Kerekes' incredible "Journal of Sex Religion Death" features such varied topics as the history of Skywald horror comics, dead celebrities, public information films, plus Jack Sargeant's diary from the Chicago Underground Film Festival. Great stuff!

PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO #28 (Michael Weldon, 3309 Rt. 97, Narrowsburg, NY 12764-6126; \$25 for 6-issues). You know it, you love it, and it's still going strong. And you know a mag's good if I'll actually pay for the thing! The latest issue of Weldon's ode to cult video (and beyond) features interviews with Mickey Spillane, Liz Renay and Beach Boy guitarist David Marks. Great (not to mention, essential) stuff! My only complaint: I wish they'd upgrade the mag's cheap, newsprint paper stock.

REEL WILD CINEMA #3 (John Harrison, 2 Glenbrae Court, Berwick, Victoria, Australia 3806). This "journal of eclectic film & video" tackles horror pics like Joe D'Amato's *Beyond the Darkness* and Pete Walker's *House of Whipcord*, and includes several exploitation and HK movie reviews. My favorite features include a career profile of Toni Basil ("Mickey") and a look back at the classic sexploitation-mag *Exciting Cinema*. Recommended.

ROASTING RODERICK #2 (Parker Anderson, P.O. Box 1285, Prescott, AZ 86302; \$3). This low-tech photocopy-'zine continues its exhaustive history of John Carradine's career, this time with his TV and

stage roles, plus assorted newspaper clippings concerning Carradine-appearances. There's also a lengthy letters column and video reviews by Dave Szurek.

SAMHAIN #68 (77 Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon EX3 0LX, England; \$5.95). The latest edition of John Gullidge's UK horror film mag features an interview with Guillermo Del Toro, a look at high school horror pics, plus assorted video and book reviews.

SINEMA BRUT #2 (Keith Breese, #R-104, 1771 S. Quebec Way, Denver, CO 80231). The second dose of this amusing and informative 'zine tackles European Women-in-Prison flicks (including *Sadomania* and *Escape From Blood Plantation*), Antonio Margheriti's Viet Nam cinema, and misc. video reviews. Low-tech (in the best sense of the word), this combines the enthusiasm of early Xerox-zines with a healthy knowledge of its subject matter.

TAIL SPINS #30-31 (P.O. Box 1860, Evanston, IL 60204; \$3 apiece, or \$15 for 6-issues). Filled with reviews, articles and interviews, the latest dose (#31) of this amusing film-music-alt. culture magazine features Electric Frankenstein and JFK's assassination, while #30 covers the history of cannibalism, with plenty of flesh-munching celeb sidebars.

THEY WON'T STAY DEAD #32 (Brian Johnson, 11 Werner Road, Greenville, PA 16125-9434; \$2). At only 8-pages, this Xerox-zine is pretty pricey, but it also offers a grab-bag of no-nonsense opinions, including a handful of video oddities (*Keep My Grave Open*, Bill Osco's porno-Alice in Wonderland) to a slew of entertaining music reviews.

TOXIC EGGS #5 (John Monsees, 348 Grove Street, 4th Floor, Jersey City, NJ 07302; \$2). This 14-page Xerox-zine ("an irregularly published review of bizarre video") might be a bit grainy in the graphics department, but it also includes several lengthy reviews of such deviant fare as *Criminally Insane* and *The Devil's Nightmare*.

TRASH TIMES #3 (Rich Behrens, P.O. Box 248, Glenview, IL 60025; \$2). The latest edition of this 24-page, xerox-digest includes an interview with Electric Frankenstein guitarist Sal, movie reviews which range from the mainstream (*Fargo*) to the more obscure (Jess Franco's *Diabolical Dr. Z*), plus assorted music and print reviews.

UNCUT #6 (Midnight Media, P.O. Box 211, Huntington, PE18 8WD, England). The UK censors are notorious for butchering videos, and this terrific mag sets the record straight, by scouring the globe for uncut copies and covering them in all of their sexy-gory-depraved glory. Loaded with lengthy, informative reviews, from Zulawski's *Possession* to more obscure indie-fare like *Berlin Snuff*.

VOMIT BAG VIDEO #1 (Shawn Johns, 2134 E. Pierce St., Phoenix, AZ 85006; \$3). Don't let the crude and slapdash appearance of this new 'zine turn you off, because it's filled with pages of old grindhouse newspaper ads, grainy snuff photos (off the Internet), and best of all, misty-eyed recollections of '70s Times Square moviegoing and some of the sleaziest films of all time (*Last House on Dead End Street*).

As you look through this magazine
you'll see ads for many mail-order video companies
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Duane Bradley, a young man who carries a wicker basket at his side, comes to Manhattan in search of the doctors who performed an unorthodox operation on him many years ago. Aiding him in his search is the occupant of the basket -- a creature very small, very twisted, and very mad...

The most infamous midnight movie of the eighties, **BASKET CASE** is finally available in a beautiful new transfer made directly from the original 35mm internegative.

Plus, as a special bonus, the Something Weird edition also includes the original theatrical trailer, never-before-seen outtakes, and rare behind-the-scenes footage from director **FRANK HENENLOTTER's** personal collection. #6614

As critic Rex Reed so aptly put it, **BASKET CASE** is "The Sickest Movie I've Ever Seen!"

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VERY SMALL, VERY TWISTED,
AND VERY MAD



FRANK HENENLOTTER'S SEXY SHOCKERS FROM THE VAULT!

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THE AWFUL DR. ORLOFF #4026

1962 • Spain • b&w • directed by Jess Franco
• Classic madness from the Spanish Master of Horror!
THE CURIOUS DR. HUMPP #4111

1967 • Argentina • b&w • directed by Emilio Vieyra
• An all-time SWV favorite! Sex experiments, goofy monsters and a disembodied brain in a bad mood!
GIRL & THE GEEK #4351

1984 • b&w • directed by Dale Berry
• Another twisted SWV classic - escaped carnival geek pursues a bleached blonde bimbo!
THE ULTIMATE DEGENERATE #4519

1969 • b&w • directed by Michael & Roberta Findlay
• Torture, murder and mutilation from the depraved duo!

OLGA'S HOUSE OF SHAME #5108

1964 • b&w • directed by Joseph P. Mawra
• Audrey Campbell stars as the sadistic Madame Olga!
PLAYGIRLS & THE VAMPIRE #6201
1960 • Italy • b&w • Classic gothic horror and cheesecake!

GODMONSTER OF INDIAN FLATS #5538
1973 • color • directed by Frederick Hobbes
• A seven foot tall mutant sheep monster goes berserk!
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1968 • b&w • directed by Michael & Roberta Findlay
• The sick climax of the notorious "Kiss" trilogy!
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1968 • b&w • with Jake La Motta
• Exploitation version of "The Most Dangerous Game!"

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• A rubber-faced monster has a "formula" for love!

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1976 • color • Southern swamp sluts supernatural style!
THE EXQUISITE CADAVER #6551

1973 • Spain • color • Arthouse horror and decapitation!
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1969 • Spain/Italy • color • directed by Mario Bava
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